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A DEFENCE
OF THE
UNITY OF GOD,
IN
FOUR LETTERS TO

The Reverend Mr. HARPER.

In REPLY to his ADDRESS to Dr. DISNEY, for Resigning
the Rectory of PANTON, and Vicarage of SWINDERLY, in
LINCOLNSHIRE; and for quitting the Established Church:
Including,

REMARKS UPON MR. ROMAINÉ'S SERMON
ON THE SELF-EXISTENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.

TOGETHER WITH
REMARKS ON THE REV. MR. HAWKINS'S LETTER
TO DR. PRIESTLEY;

And upon a PUBLICATION, entitled
HORÆ SOLITARIÆ:

With General OBSERVATIONS, on the common insubstantial Mode, of
defending the DOCTRINE of the TRINITY.

BY G. CLARK.

1 Cor. viii. 6. TO US THERE IS BUT ONE GOD, THE FATHER.

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INCOME

OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

FOR THE YEAR 1881

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author's intention of publishing the following sheets, having got abroad, has furnished a fund for tea-table conversation, in the neighbourhood where he resides.---Some of his neighbours have very gravely observed, that "they detest innovations in religion," and, with a very sour grimace, have extolled the Hudibrastic lines ----

*"As though religion was intended,
For nothing else but to be mended!"*

"It is a safer and better way (say they) to submit to the teaching of the minister God has set over us, than to investigate too nicely things we cannot understand." ---- This class of his neighbours, the author refers to the History of the Reformation --- where it will be found that this is the very spirit of Popery; and that if the world had never rejected this priest-ridden sentiment, Popery would at this moment, have spread her baneful wings over the whole British Empire. So far, therefore, as they countenance this opinion, so far they countenance the fundamental principles of Popery, and reproach the Reformers with the character of innovators and schismatics. And besides this, they degrade their own rational powers, they treat with inexcusable contempt their own REASON, by which chiefly they are distinguished from the brute creation, and which was given them for the express purpose of enabling them to discriminate between truth and falsehood; especially in the great concerns of their knowledge of and obedience to God. But so depraved and paradoxical are men of this description, that at the same time they reject their own reason and discernment, in the great concerns of God and Religion, they plume themselves as superior to all others in their political acumen and secular discretion---thinking it their duty and interest to investigate every concern in which the honour of God, and the true happiness of man, have no part: as though the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," which Christianity inspires us to hope after, were to them lighter and more insubstantial than air!

Others,

Others, who pay more respect to *good-manners*, than to TRUTH, think it assuming and arrogant for a *Layman* to contend against one of the *Clergy*. But these good folks should recollect, that all men's opinions, as to the sanctity of the clerical character, are not the same. No man living more truly venerates the character of an honest and virtuous Clergyman, than the Author does---but he sees no reason why Laymen should not resist the erroneous opinions of the Clergy, with the same freedom that the Clergy reprobate the ill conduct of the Laity. But what completely justifies the Author of the following Letters to the Rev. Mr. HARPER, is, that if he is reprehensible on this head, he has had Mr. HARPER himself for an example, who wrote his strictures upon the very honourable and exemplary conduct of Dr. DISNEY*, while he himself was a Layman, and when he probably had as little prospect of sustaining the clerical character, as his *Animadverter* has.

Happy he is, however, in the prospect, that the liberal and intelligent among his neighbours, whose numbers are by no means inconsiderable, will honour his endeavours to develop the TRUTH, with an impartial trial by the evidence of Reason and Holy Scripture, and that their verdict will be founded on the real merits or demerits of so important a cause.

UXBRIDGE.

G. C.

* Dr. DISNEY, like many other distinguished characters in this day, unable to resist the force of Truth, and too virtuous to conceal it, chose rather to relinquish a valuable acquisition in the Church, than to be instrumental in conducting a worship which his judgment condemned.

ERRATUM.—P. 168, last word, for *foundation*, read *fountain*.---
Other trifling errors the author hopes will be excused, on account of his distance from the press.

To the Reverend Mr. HARPER.

LETTER I.

S I R,

I THANK you for the gift of your *Address to* Dr. DISNEY.—I have read it over with that prejudice in its favour, which the value I have set upon your character would naturally inspire; and am much pleased with the boldness with which you declare your sentiments, upon a subject so unpleasant to a rational mind, and so enveloped in mystery: Nothing stamps a stronger impression of credit upon a man's character, than firmness in a cause in which he engages; so that that firmness does not spring from implicit prejudice, or a party spirit. In the present instance, I have too great an opinion of your good sense, to believe the former; and of your honesty, to subscribe to the latter. I can, therefore, very readily believe, that you have industriously explored the sacred writings, in order to investigate the truth of the doctrines you contend for; and you have been satisfied that they are taught there. But when it is considered how frail, how exceedingly frail, and inconstant the human mind is; when we consider, how apt we are to *search* under the weight of pre-conceived opinions; we should be careful how we place too much *confidence* in the convictions we receive from our researches. To err is incident to our very nature and constitutions; and, therefore, however firmly we are persuaded of the truth of our opinions, upon points of speculation—we should never be without this persuasion also, that it is possible we may be deceived.

Let us apply this doctrine to your case.—You have searched the Scriptures honestly and industriously, for the forming of your opinions: You have formed a strong and seemingly inveterate opinion, in favour of a Trinity of persons, in the Unity of the Godhead. Did you never believe in your life, as firmly some other doctrine, which you have since seen reason to recede from? I speak to you now as an inquiring man; and I conceive it to be impossible, to view a man in that light, without presuming that he has, at some time or other, found occasion to reject deep-rooted and sometimes favourite opinions. This perfectly consists with an adage I have heard, and which I think applicable here — *The man who never changed his opinion, never corrected his errors.*—And whether this be the fact or not with respect to yourself; yet this is most certain, that you lay no claim to infallibility; that you are, in fact, fallible, and liable to err; and, that you may have erred, is not beyond the bounds of possibility, nor improbable, in a very remote degree.

There are two things I shall particularly remark upon, with some degree of censure: The one is, your blaming your antagonist with misapplications and perversions of Scripture; and the other is, your fondness for the term *fundamental*, when applied to the *Deity* of our blessed Lord. You certainly have not, in your publication, detected Dr. DISNEY, in a single instance of perverting or misapplying; and until you had done that, the use of such expressions, argues a want of candour. And till you had proved, that the Supreme *Deity* of Jesus Christ is declared in Scripture to be a *fundamental* doctrine, you should not have called it so. In doing so, you teach another gospel than

than that which the apostles taught. Where do the Scriptures *plainly say*, that unless a man believe that Jesus Christ is God, he shall not be saved?—The words you quote from YOUNG, give a direct negative, even to the use of the word *fundamental*; and I wish it were not true, that that quotation is inapplicable and repugnant to your whole address.

You may perhaps think you have found it, where the penetrating eye of Mr. ROMAINÉ, long since defcried it; John viii. 24.—*If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins.* He has pathetically laboured, through a whole sermon, to frighten his hearers and readers into a belief, that the words *ἐγώ εἰμι*, here point out, the *self-existence* of our blessed Lord: and that a want of belief in this his self-existence, is a damnable error; than which nothing can be more presumptuously absurd. He is *absurd*, in having put a meaning on this passage, which it cannot possibly bear; and *presumptuously* so, in dealing out so abundantly the divine thunder, against heresies of his *own* creation.—Mr. ROMAINÉ's reference to Exodus, where God is supposed to say to Moses, *I am that I am—I am hath sent me*, &c. is palpably inapplicable: The plain meaning of these words is — *I will be that I will be*: referring to the certainty of God's effecting his determinations. And therefore, when he desires Moses to say, *I will be hath sent me*—he does, as it were, say, 'Let them know, by this declaration, that I will bring to pass what I have promised'—It will then follow, that Mr. ROMAINÉ's observation, "that the same words, *I am*, spoken on the same subject, must convey the same idea of self-existence," is, in this instance, doubly erroneous: 1st, In that the *same* words are not used in both places; but words as different as words can be, which
speak

speak of the time *present*, and the time *to come*. And,
 2d, In that, if we were to admit, (which cannot be done,
 without falsifying the divine records) that the words are
 the same; yet it would then by no means be true, that
 they were the same words, spoken on the *same subject*;
 though this gentleman is pleased, against the plainest
truth and *reason*, to say so. The words, in one in-
 stance, were spoken by the *God* and *Father* of our Lord
 Jesus Christ; the other by him who scrupled not to
 say—*The Father is greater than I.* — But how grossly
 this gentleman is mistaken, will appear demonstrably
 plain, if we refer to the next chapter, John ix. 9.
 where the same words are used by the man born blind.
 The 8th and 9th verses run thus: — *The neighbours,*
therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was
blind, said; Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said,
This is he. Others said, He is like him. But he said,
εγω ειμι; I AM. I leave the application to your own
 discernment. You will, perhaps, be of my opinion,
 that Mr. ROMAINE's Sermon, on the Self-Existence
 of Jesus Christ, recommends a system of divinity, as
 opposite to that contained in the Scriptures, as truth
 and error can be.

The doctrinal truths of Scripture are not left to the
 mere deductions of logicians: they are not generally
 conveyed to us in parables and metaphors: but in plain
 and direct terms, level with every man's comprehen-
 sion. Every necessary information is so plain, that the
 most illiterate may understand it. And this method
 at once becomes the dignity and goodness of God; and
 the nature of a divine revelation. — It is true, the
 Scriptures of the New-Testament speak of mysteries
 in religion: but they also speak of those mysteries
 as *unfolded*, as *revealed*, as *made manifest*: They are no
 longer

longer hidden, but revealed; and that clearly, repeatedly, and unquestionably.

I. You give a reason for the adoption of the terms *One Lord*, (Deut. vi. 4.) but, in doing that, have not thrown any light upon the subject, nor have you treated it in a way that at all affects the Unitarian cause, any more than the Trinitarian; nay, as far as you have gone, you have said exactly what an Unitarian would have said. This palpable use, however, may be made of your observation, against your own cause, viz. That if God intended in these words to warn the Israelites against idolatry, and to give them a true notion of the Supreme Deity, and that Deity really existed in a *Trinity of persons*, he would, no doubt, have said, as your favourite *Athanasius* has done, that they should worship “One God in Trinity, and a Trinity in Unity;” but as this is not said, and as the existence of the Deity is here pointed out as simply ONE, we have a right to argue, nay, we are bound to contend, that God, in his *essence, being or person*, is ONE.

No, you say; this passage does by no means prove it---With your leave, I will consider the reason you have given, why it does not; and that is in your own words, as follows: “For this monosyllable *one*, is used to express a sameness of spirit, essence, consent, love, design, or interest, among several persons.” But I pray you, is this a sufficient reason? Because the word *one* in some places signifies a unity of consent, design, &c. must it therefore always mean so? Prove this to be the fact, and we shall find less difficulty in believing that it bears the same meaning here. But let your argument stand as it does, and it will destroy itself: for let it only be proved, that the term *one*, when applied

applied to a rational agent, means sometimes *one person*, which it certainly does ; and then how boldly might it be argued against you, that the word *one* in this place, does not mean an unity of *essence*, but of *person*.---And if this were done, how could you parry the blow ?--But this argument would be more effectual against you, if the fact were spoken out, *i. e.* that the word *one*, when applied to a rational agent, *always* means ONE PERSON.

I observe, that in the instances you bring, there are four of them which are altogether inapplicable to your argument, were it ever so good in other respects, viz. 1 Sam. xi. 7, 8. *One Consent*. 2 Chron. xviii. 12. *One Mouth*. Eccl. iii. 19. *One Breath*. John xvii. 23. *One Spirit*. I say these are inapplicable ; because in these, that in which the unity consists is clearly pointed out, namely, *Consent*, *Mouth*, *Breath*. Take the first instance, and no doubt, there were 330,000 *Consents*, or 330,000 *Persons*, or *Beings* that consented ; but you don't mean to say, that these 330,000 were all one individual essence. If then these passages do not point out a distinction between an unity of essence, and a plurality of persons in that undivided essence ; they prove nothing at all, either for or against the point in question.

You do, however, in this sort of argument, accord with the Unitarians. --- You say, that the *oneness* mentioned in John xvii. 21. 23. Phil. i. 27. and Heb. ii. 11. means *consent* or *design*. Now apply this reasoning to 1 John v. 7. and you effectually destroy the evidence of this text, as for a Trinity in Unity. For if the monosyllable, in three or four places you have quoted, means any thing less than an Unity of Nature ; how does it appear, that it may not signify something

something else than Unity of Nature in the text,
1 John, v. 7. *And these three are ONE?*

But I observe, (and sorry I am to observe) that in the list of unities which you have produced, you have drawn in the word *essence*, as one of the meanings of the monosyllable *one*; for unless you intend, that unity of essence is the meaning of the monosyllable *one*, your argument is nugatory and futile. It is the meaning, or application, of the monosyllable, you are contending for; and unless your argument goes to prove that it is applied to unity of *essence*, and that too in direct opposition, or contradistinction, to a unity of *persons*, it is no argument at all --- you are merely beating the air. Let us, however, take the point up upon the other ground, and see how much better purpose that will serve: Eccl. iii. 19. 'They have all one breath, or *essence*,' (say you). Now pray, how does it appear that the English word *breath*, or that the Hebrew word רוח, signifies *essence*? I aver, that neither of them mean *essence*, any more than they mean *a mountain*: and it lies with you to prove that they do.

Had the Hebrew word נפש, been used, there might perhaps have been some pretence for your observation --- but as the matter stands, there is not even the appearance of any. The word *essence* appears to be thrown in by main force, to serve a cause, which is supported by imposing such meanings upon words as the fancy of the writer shall dictate, or the exigency of the case shall make necessary. That cause must surely be very impotent, which needs such wretched supports, and which is built upon such unsubstantial foundations. --- This is not mere exclamation; I am now alluding to a very serious and a very awful fact; which is, that men do actually, in defending the doc-

trine of the Trinity, put such meanings upon words as they bear on no other occasion whatever. And this is the case with the word *person*, as distinguished from *essence*. Nay, new words are created for the mere purpose of conveying ideas of things not in existence: And this is the case with the word *Trinity*, or *Triunity* *.

Now, I say, these facts are very serious ones; because they innovate upon the dictates of common-sense, and so tend to introduce confusion: and they are awful, because they tend to bewilder the mind, and leave it occupied by imperfect conceptions, or to produce half-formed ideas of phantoms, instead of substantial truths; of a three-fold Divinity, instead of the one *living* and *true* God: And thus is introduced a denial of the Supreme Divinity --- a denial of that first principle of all true religion --- *that there is but one God and Father of all*.

The confusion thus introduced is obvious, in that very few Trinitarians are agreed as to what they themselves understand by the word *person*. You have, in the address before me, given a turn to it, which Trinitarians in general would affect to detest --- Who of them, versed in the arcana of the Trinity, will not shudder at hearing the word *person* explained by the word *being*, as you have done, page 28? The consequences

* Neither Luther nor Calvin were very fond of the word *Trinity*. Luther says, (*Postil. major Dominic.*) ‘The word Trinity sounds oddly, and is an human invention. It were better to call Almighty God, God, than *Trinity*.’ --- Calvin says, (*Admon. 1. ad Polonos*) ‘I like not this prayer, *O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity*; it favours of barbarity. The word *Trinity* is barbarous, insipid, profane; an human invention, grounded on no testimony of God’s word; the Popish God, unknown to the prophets and apostles.’

sequences, they would tell you, are too palpable---they would tell you, that if the word *person* means *being*, and there are three of those *persons*, there must be three *beings*, and then doubtless there are three Gods!

I have said that the word *person* has an arbitrary meaning imposed upon it, to serve the Trinitarian cause; and this you acknowledge, *page 27*. when you tell us, that 'this is a word properly adopted by the Church, in this particular construction, and that it does not signify a person in the *usual* sense of the word, but a divine agent.' But who gave authority to the Church thus to change the meaning of words? Or, rather, how did it become necessary, that a word should be adopted to express that which the Scripture is said to have so *clearly revealed*? Has the Scripture clearly taught the doctrine, and yet used no words to express it? Is there the sense only, but not the sound? In a book expressly calculated to reveal truths, which our reason could not reach, or was not likely to reach, is the doctrine so obscurely taught, as that there should be the subject, but no words by which the belief or knowledge of it could be conveyed to our understandings? Is it probable, is it possible, that this should be the case? --- Answer, my friend, these questions to the satisfaction of your conscience, before you go one step farther in the devious path of trinitarian mysteries. The necessity there is for such an adoption, puts a very suspicious appearance upon your cause --- it teaches, that there is something unsound at bottom--- that the doctrine wants the aid of revelation --- and no wonder that it should appear deficient, when that necessity arises from a distinction which common sense revolts at. I mean the distinction between the *essence* of a *being*, and the *person* of that being --- a dis-

inction as devoid of scriptural sanction, as are the grossest errors of popery --- a distinction which should never have been made the foundation of a divine doctrine, unless it had been built upon the express authority of the all-wise God. I know no better mode of exposing the futility and extravagance of this distinction, than by reversing the position in the form of one plain question, which I also beg you will maturely consider ; and that question is, How do you prove (the Scriptures saying not a word about either *essence* or *person*) that the true meaning of the scriptural doctrine is not, that there are, in the *one* undivided *person* of the Deity, three co-equal and co-eternal *beings* or *essences* ? This question may perhaps startle you, it may perhaps shock you ; but it is a fair question, and deserves an unprejudiced consideration, and candid answer.

In order to render this argument complete, let us now take into consideration what *essence* is, and what *person* is ; and whether they differ so materially as Trinitarians would have us believe. --- The common definition of *essence* is, that it is " the nature, substance, or being of a thing, that which constitutes or determines the nature of it ; or which is absolutely necessary for its being what it is." The common definition of a *person* is, that it is " an individual substance of a rational or intelligent nature." Now these two definitions, the one of the term *essence*, and the other of the term *person*, do, at the utmost, shew us, that the only difference between *essence* and *person* is this, that *essence* is the nature common to all of the same class of beings, and that *person* is the individuation of that essence ; but still it leaves every distinct person with his own peculiar share (if I may so speak) of that essence, and then the essence of each
person

person becomes as individual as the person is ; separate and distinct from all other essences of the same kind. This sort of reasoning, I am persuaded, gives the utmost scope to the distinction between person and essence that it will bear : And admitting that these distinctions are the production of nature, and not mere terms of art, there is nothing gained from hence in favour of a *plurality* of persons in the *unity* of the divine essence.

The fact however is, that the word *essence* is a mere term of art, which has no precise foundation in nature: And although it may serve, in this way, in common parlance to help our expression, yet it does not convey any thing intelligible to the mind ; it does not help our ideas to a single fact, that we cannot attain to by the use of the term *person* only : Nay, the most simple definition of either of these terms, will exactly suit the other of them : Thus, *the essence of an intelligent being, is that which determines what that being is ; or, the person of an intelligent being, is that which determines what that being is.* And whether we call a man a human being, or a human person, we mean exactly the same thing ; and they, in fact, are the same thing.

And what we before observed is true, that the phrase, the *essence* of a being, is of no use to convey ideas to our minds more than the term *person* is : that we in common speak of the essence of a being, the essence of a person, the essence of a thing ; as though essence were rather a property of being than *being* itself. And that *person* is the most natural term, and gives the readiest and plainest information to the mind, is clear ; in that the *person* is viewed rather as the essential intelligent being itself, than as an attribute, or quality, of a being : For whereas the term *essence* is applicable

to things inanimate, as well as animate; *personality* is applicable only to a rational and intelligent nature.

Allow, however, for the sake of argument, the distinction of essence and person; and we shall then find in nature, no instance of one essence with more than one person; nor an instance of one person with more than one essence. And as we can only reason from what we know, we are bound to believe, that throughout all nature, each individual person has his own individual essence, distinct from the essence of all other persons whatsoever.

From what has been said, it may, at any rate, be reasonably inferred, that there does not in nature exist any such distinction of persons and essences, as will justify the Trinitarian doctrine; or, if we take it for granted, that God is somehow three, and somehow one, that there does not exist such a distinction of persons and essences, as will make it appear a necessary conclusion, that he is rather three persons in one essence, than that he is three essences in one person: And if the light we have from nature and the holy Scriptures, has taught us expressly the distinction Trinitarians make; the former, by shewing that it is possible that there may be more than one individual person in one individual essence; and the latter, by shewing that this possible thing is realized in the Deity: then, we may not hesitate to believe that there is in the one Divine essence a multiplied personality. But if, in viewing nature, we find no examples of such a distinction, or, rather, if in viewing it we find that this is a distinction which nature disavows; and if in exploring the pages of Revelation, we find no such distinction repeatedly and expressly taught, we are brought to the height of the argument --- and there remains nothing

to be done, but that we acquiesce in the simplicity of truth.

If I were to call upon you, Sir, to shew where the Scriptures repeatedly and expressly declare, that there is a *three-fold personality* in the unity of the Divine *essence*; it is manifestly clear, that I should be proposing to you an utterly impossible task: I shall therefore avoid putting you to this test, lest it should be construed into an insult to your understanding; but shall satisfy myself with this conviction --- *that the Scriptures observe a profound silence upon this essential point of the controversy.*

II. It does not occur to me, that the passage, Luke iv. 8. has any thing in it respecting the matter in dispute, unless it be, that it proves our Lord's subordination to God -- in that he is represented as telling satan that he could not worship him, because he was bound to the worship and service of GOD.

III. You account for the inferiority our Lord speaks of, John xx. 17. by observing, that he was inferior to God his Father: 1st, In nature, by joining the human to the divine; 2^{dly}, In essence, by being made sin for us. --- If these words of yours are not in a very high degree derogatory to the honour of the Deity, I do not perfectly understand them. Your distinction between the *nature* and *essence* of Christ, and as to his essence being made inferior to the Father, by having sin imputed to him, are ideas so mazy and perplexed, that no distinct meaning can be fixed either to them, or to any other part of your observations on this text. And the little that can be collected of your meaning appears to be of a very awful nature. Your undisguised, naked arguments, stand thus: --- ' There
' are more than one who are properly the supreme God;
' namely, God the Father, and God the Son --- before
' the

' the incarnation, God the Father was not the God
 ' of God the Son --- during the term of the incar-
 ' nation, God the Father was the God of God
 ' the Son --- then, after the ascension of God the
 ' Son, God the Father ceased to be his God.' ----
 Again: ' The Supreme God, even God the Son,
 ' being equal to the Supreme God, even God the Fa-
 ' ther, became (by joining the human nature to the
 ' divine) inferior to the Supreme God !' Thus does
 this doctrine impute changes to him with whom there
 is no variableness, neither shadow of turning ! ---
 Once more: ' God the Son being co-equal with God
 ' the Father in his essence, became inferior to God the
 ' Father in his essence, by having sin imputed to him :
 ' that is, the supreme, independent, and eternally glo-
 ' rious God and Father of all things, was made sin for
 ' mankind ; and so the very essence of God the Son,
 ' which is indisputably the identical and individual
 ' essence of God the Father, became inferior to the
 ' essence of God the Father, and so, no doubt, inferior
 ' to itself.' And this, you say, ' very clearly ac-
 ' counts, on scriptural principles, for this inferiority,
 ' without the least affecting his divinity !' Gracious
 God ! (with a mixture of horror and reverence I
 speak it) how is it that rational beings will so far depart
 from the truth, as to prefer the nonsense and trash of
 error, to the sublime and rational truths of thy glo-
 rious gospel ! What is there in the most corrupt of all
 the legends of Popery --- what is there in the grossest
 idolatry of Heathens --- what is there among the most
 absurd fables of the Alcoran --- that deserves the im-
 putation of error and impiety, in a degree equal to
 this ! How can we wonder that men start back, with
 horror and indignation, from a system, which presents
 itself

itself to the rational belief, in such hideous and questionable forms?

Excuse, my friend, this zeal; it is a love of the truth which directs me to oppose a system so dishonourable to the immaculate Divinity, and so disgraceful to rational creatures to believe! Let us no longer be astonished at the ignorance and idolatry of the Heathen, the superstition of the Papist, the idle fancies of the Mahometan, or the objections of the Deist; while Protestants can nourish in their minds a system infinitely exceeding them all, in every thing that can render religious speculations contemptible.

IV. After the most mature deliberation, I cannot help considering, that the words of Thomas, which you have quoted --- *My Lord, and my God* --- are a mere exclamation; the result of a devout rapture; proceeding from his transport and astonishment, at having before his eyes one who was raised from the dead, and whom he never had expected to see any more. Or, if we consider these words of Thomas as directly applied to Christ, we must, at the same time, make some allowances for the surprize and astonishment which then had seized him, and not tie ourselves down to believe that he then considered our Lord in the character of the Supreme God.

Admit, however, for a moment, that Thomas really considered our Lord (who then appeared before him in a human form, with his side and hands wounded) as the supreme and impassible DEITY; yet, it will surely be admitted that Thomas was a fallible man, and therefore might be mistaken. Instances of the gross ignorance of the apostles concerning the person and mission of Christ, are very plentiful; quite enough of them are recorded to assure us, that what was said or done

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by

by the apostles, previous to our Lord's ascension, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, is not fit matter either of instruction or example to us. The rapture and astonishment he then experienced, are, however, a sufficient apology for his zeal, if it does appear a little intemperate: and the generally dark state of the human mind at the time this happened, is a sufficient apology for any appearance of ignorance.

V. The same way in which you get rid of the plain language of our Lord, in John xx. 17. you use in disposing of Mark x. 18. *Why callest thou me good? There is none good but One, that is God.* --- And you make our Lord's refusal of the appellation *good*, to arise from his having the sins of mankind imputed to him: 'Under 'this load of accumulated guilt, why callest thou me 'good?' By this exposition of our Lord's words, you make him to declare that he was *guilty*: and that therefore, the calling him good, was what he had no claim to. I am sorry to find that you can reconcile to yourself the notion, that the dread and immaculate Deity had the sins of mankind imputed to him; and that, by this imputation, he became guilty! This appears to me to be a monstrous idea! Excuse me if I declare, that this notion is, in my opinion, most degrading to the Deity, and retrograde to all our notions of his Supreme dignity. The method Trinitarians use of torturing and perverting the plain language of Scripture, in derogation of a consistent and rational doctrine, and in support of one full of absurdity and contradiction, is, to me, a most manifest proof of the puerile state of the human mind; and that men, through the prejudice of education, may be brought to believe *any thing*. If they were willing to take the words as they stand, without wresting them, they contain a violent presumptive

presumptive proof, that he was not that God of whom he was speaking, as the Supreme *Good*. And our Lord's rebuke did not arise from a sense that he was not at all intitled to the appellation *good*: this by no means follows. His words were intended to teach the young man, who was the *supreme* and only *essential* Good. Our Lord's language tended to teach him two lessons: the one of them, that there is but one supreme, original good; which is God: the other, that he should observe sincerity and truth in his conversation. And it teaches us, that the doctrine of the supreme deity of Christ, was not only not taught by our blessed Lord; but that he absolutely disavowed the idea. --- *Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one; that is, GOD.* In which words you will be pleased to observe, that our Lord rejects, with a degree of indignation, the idea of his being the supreme *good*; that is, GOD: and that he tells us who is the supreme *good*; namely, GOD. Now, let it not be said, that our Lord, in this declaration, did not *exclude* himself: because such a saying must proceed either from great ignorance, or great obstinacy; inasmuch as it is impossible to read the words without perceiving, 1. That Christ did not esteem himself to be the supreme, essential good: 2. That he actually was not the supreme, essential good: 3. That there is only *one* who is *good* in himself; that is, without communication from any other: 4. That this *one* supreme good, is GOD: 5. That this supreme good, even God, is *one* being or person: 6. That he is so the one *good*, in direct, general contradistinction, to all other beings or persons whatsoever: And, 7. That he is so the one GOD, and supreme, essential GOOD, in particular and direct contradistinction to our Lord Jesus Christ.

VI. The words of Paul to Timothy next claim our attention --- *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.* ---- This text certainly stands as a proof of the true nature of that excellent Being whom we call Jesus Christ. The apostle could not have used more positive and unequivocal words, had he foreseen all the absurdities men have fallen into by means of the Trinitarian hypothesis. He tells you, that there is *one God*; this is his major proposition: that there are also *men*: and, lastly, that there is a certain Mediator between that God and men; namely, *the man Christ Jesus.* --- If Paul had conceived that Jesus Christ was the supreme God, would he not have done as a Trinitarian now would do? would he not have said, that there is one Mediator between God and man, even Jesus Christ, *who is both God and man*? --- In order to avoid, without much trouble, the evidence of this passage, you do not say a single syllable as to the meaning of it; but merely quote it, (I presume, to prove his manhood) and go directly to decide upon another point; viz. *that he is God also*: And you leave this same St. Paul to decide this for you; as if it were very likely, that St. Paul, that great teacher and wise man, in order to convince the future generations of the world, that the Mediator was both God and man, would, in one epistle to Timothy, teach that he was positively *a man*; and, in an epistle written to the Christians at Colosse, he should say as positively, that he was *the supreme God*; leaving those who were *to be taught*, to put these things together --- and to learn, by a mere train of reasoning, that Christ, in one person, was the supreme God, and a mortal man.

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Let us, however, see how *decisively* St. Paul has taught us that Christ was *God also*. ‘In his Epistle ‘to the Colossians, (you say) he exhorts them finally ‘to maintain the truth of Christ; in whom, he immediately adds, dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead ‘bodily.’ I observe, first, (which is, indeed, immaterial to the argument) that the apostle does not, *immediately* before, exhort them, finally to maintain the faith of Christ; as you say he does. How you came to say that he had done so, is a little extraordinary!

Your exposition of the apostle’s words, is as follows: --- *In whose body dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead.* --- Let this be taken as the true meaning of the words; and what do you gain by it, in proof of your point? Unitarians believe, as well as you do, that the supreme God did dwell in Christ: but they contend, that if this being admitted, does prove that Christ is God, they can also, by the same sort of argument, prove, that the saints are God; for God is said to dwell in them: See 1 John iii. 24. *ch.* iv. 12. 15. 17. &c. And the apostle prays that they may be filled with *all the fulness of God*, Eph. iii. 19. If men were in the full possession of their reasoning powers, these observations would be sufficient; but as deep-rooted prejudices are to be encountered, we will go a little further. The words are --- *In him* (that is, in Christ) *dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.* Observe, the Godhead is said to dwell *bodily* in Christ; and therefore, it does not bear that less important sense you adopt, of *the Godhead being in the body of Christ*. Observe also, that the Godhead is said to dwell in *Christ*. And the word Christ is mentioned, *ver.* 5th and 6th---*Your faith in Christ*---*Ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord.*---Who, I pray you, is here meant by Christ?

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The whole person of Christ, or a part of the person of Christ? Undoubtedly, the whole; you will say. Be it so --- and let us go on to *ver.* 8. which immediately precedes the verse we are considering: There, he again mentions Christ, ‘*And not after Christ.*’--- Who is meant here, the whole of Christ, or only a part of Christ? --- If you say the whole of Christ --- and what else can you say? --- then it will turn out, that the Godhead which was in Christ, was not a part of Christ; and, therefore, that Christ is not God. For it is not said, that the Godhead was *united* to Christ --- or, that it was become a *part* of Christ --- or, that the Godhead was become Christ: --- but, that *in* Christ --- *in* that *person, agent, or being*, who is called Christ --- the fulness of the Godhead *did dwell*. --- If, on the other hand, you should find courage enough to assert, that a part of Christ is meant; then shew me, or give up your cause, that there is sufficient reason, in all the former parts of the epistle, to understand the word *Christ*, as referring to the *whole person* of Christ; and that, in this particular place, it means a *part only* of the person of Christ.

What then, you will say, can be the meaning of the text? --- I will answer you, in one of the learned HAMMOND’s notes on the passage; who was a Trinitarian. He says --- ‘The word *bodily*, may be taken ‘in opposition to *shadows*, or *dark resemblances*; God’s ‘will being in Christ, not in shadows, (as among the ‘Jews); but *plainly* and *substantially* revealed, for the ‘practice of inward purity; and not for the observation of those shadows thereof, which had been amongst ‘the Jews. And thus the 17th verse seems to interpret it --- The sabbaths are a *shadow* of things to ‘come; but the *body* is of Christ: though they were

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‘as commemorations instituted for the Jews, by
 ‘strength of that institution to be observed by them;
 ‘yet had they also a further aspect to somewhat
 ‘under the New-Testament; and, as such, are said to
 ‘be a *shadow* of things to come, the *body*, or *reality*,
 ‘whereof is of Christ: --- where the Christian *doctrine*
 ‘is affirmed to be that *substantial divinity*, of which
 ‘that which was under the law was a *shadow*.’ ---
 These are the words of that learned man --- I hope
 you will not slight his observations. Remember, my
 dear friend, that Truth is a weighty and momentous
 thing; and that it will best answer the great purpose
 of our beings, to lay aside creeds and formularies, and
 to give credit to the doctrine of God, as it is taught in
 the Scriptures. I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your very humble servant,

G. C.

LETTER

 LETTER II.

DEAR SIR,

I SHALL now come to the positive or affirmative part of this controversy, (as you term it) and examine that part of your publication wherein you proceed to prove that Jesus Christ is GOD.

The first passage you adduce, is Gen. i. 1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." How does this prove that Jesus Christ is God? You say, "By reading John i. 3. and Col. i. 16, &c. we shall find that the Lord Jesus Christ was here particularly and especially referred to as God the creator." I have read the passages you have referred to, and can find no such *particular* and *especial* reference as you speak of --- but feel fresh astonishment at the positive and unfounded assertions with which this doctrine is supported. Nothing, however, is more certain, than that this sort of language cannot alter facts, or convince the minds of *thinking men*.

II. The first passage you refer to, in support of your declaration, is John i. 3. "All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which was made."——I contend, Sir, that although it should here be proved, that all things were made *by* Christ, yet it would be no proof that he was the *Creator* of them, in the true and primary idea of creation. The words would prove indeed, that Christ was a *mean* or *agent* made use of by the Supreme Father in
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the creation---whatever creation it be that the apostle alludes to : but they would not prove that the Almighty Power which brought this world into being, was the *power* of CHRIST --- for that is the point in controversy. By this time you may probably begin to think that the evidence of this text, is irrefragable in your favour : but let me intreat you for a moment to suspend your judgment, and I pledge myself to shew you, that what I have said is the fact : and that the work of creation furnishes you with no proof whatever of the deity of Christ --- if it be admitted that Jesus Christ, and the creation of the world, are here both spoken of. Nay, I will prove to demonstration (if there is any proof which deserves that name) that the part our blessed LORD sustained in the transaction which the apostle refers to, is an invincible proof that he is not the supreme God, the Creator of all things.

You will be pleased to observe, that the word translated *by*, “by whom all things were made,” is *διὰ*, which frequently signifies the *agent*, *mean*, or *instrument*, *by* which any one performs a thing ; as *ἐκ* signifies the operation of him, from whom the authority or power proceeds. And if this be the case, (and that it is, I will anon prove to you) what hinders but that we should understand here, that ‘God *made* all things, *by* or *through* (*διὰ*) *Jesus Christ* ?’

Let us now proceed to prove that this was the case : that he was a mean or agent under the Supreme Being, in the work here referred to. — The apostle Paul, no doubt alluding to the same subject, Ephes. iii. 9. tells us that “God created all things *διὰ* *by* Jesus Christ.” Here you see, Sir, that *GOD* is pointed out to us as the fountain, or first cause, of the creation of which he speaks. “God *created* all things”---this is a most

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express

exprefs and pofitive declaration : — God then was the primary caufe of this *creation*. — How did God effect this, (for he, in his wifdom, generally acts by means) ? The apoftle tells you, that he created them “ *by* JESUS CHRIST.” Jefus Chrift was the agent, or medium, he ufed in that work. — Now I argue, that he who *created* was GOD, and he *by* whom God created, muft be another being, and inferior to God ; and that for thefe reafons : — Firft, becaufe there are two named, one of whom does an act by the power and authority of the other ; and therefore he muft be another being, as no one can be his own agent : He who acts, and he by whose authority he acts, muft be two. And, fecondly, as our Lord has faid, that he who fends is greater than him who is fent, fo he who bears any commiffion, muft be inferior to him whose commiffion he bears. I fhould not inforce the matter in this way, but I fear you would otherwife pafs over too lightly, this explicit proof of our Lord’s inferiority to the Father, in the work here referred to ; efpecially as the creation of the world, which you fuppofe is taught in thefe words, is fo frequently adduced in proof of their equality.

And this is not all : — the fame apoftle, 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. ftill more demonftrably fupports this doctrine, and puts it out of all difpute ; fo that did I not know you, and the force of education upon honeft minds, I fhould be led to conclude, that none but interefted men, or men diftempered in their minds, could gainfay it. --- ‘ Though there be that are called gods, ‘ whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods ‘ many, and lords many) ; but to us there is but one ‘ God, the Father, of (*in* or *from*) whom are all things, ‘ and we in him ; and one Lord Jefus Chrift, by (*διὰ*) ‘ whom

'whom are all things, and we by him.' The subject here is, the *one* GOD, and *one* LORD of Christians. --- The one God he declares is THE FATHER; the one Lord he declares is JESUS CHRIST. He also tells us, that all things are of (~~ex~~ or *from*) GOD; as 2 Cor. v. 18*. And by way of distinguishing the one Lord
Jesus

* This passage shews, that in the work of Redemption, God is the spring and fountain of all we are blessed with; and if the import of this and the three following verses, be duly considered, they will be found to contain, in a very few words, the whole sum and substance of the Gospel: '*All things are of God*' ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, all things proceed from God, as the great source of all --- '*who hath reconciled us to himself*' --- Observe, the work of Redemption is the fruit of the love of God --- Observe also, that the redemption of mankind consists not in God's being reconciled to man, but in man's being reconciled to God --- '*by διὰ Jesus Christ.*' Here he declares the means by which this reconciliation was effected; it was by the mission and instrumentality of Jesus Christ. '*For God* (says the apostle) *was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.*' Still you see God was the Reconciler, and God did this *in* and *by* Christ: '*Not imputing their trespasses unto them.*' He does not say that God was reconciled to man; much less that he was reconciled by receiving an equivalent; not a word about either: But man was reconciled to God, by having his sins *forgiven* him, of the free mercy and love of God: '*And hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation:*' Hath appointed us to declare to all the world, the exceeding riches of God's grace and mercy to mankind, and thereby to restore mankind to virtue, and friendship with God. '*Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ: as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*' The ministry of this reconciliation being committed to us; we therefore, as the ambassadors of Christ, pray you to be reconciled to God. . . . Still, you see, not one word about God's being reconciled to us. '*For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*' For he hath suffered him, who was an innocent character, and therefore did not deserve any punishment, to be accused, condemned, and

Jesus Christ from the one God, he tells you, that all things are by (*διὰ through*) JESUS CHRIST.— As the apostle was here speaking against the polytheism of the heathens, and teaching the Corinthians who was the true God of the Christians, no occasion could have been more opportune than this, for declaring openly his sentiments concerning the Deity: and if the *Trinity* had been an *essential* or *fundamental* article of the Christian faith, I am persuaded no reason can be given to justify so gross an omission, as the apostle must, in that case, have made in this instance. But the fact is, that Paul knew of no such doctrine: he knew only, that the foundation of all true religion was the acknowledgment of *one* living and true God; and that the peculiar doctrine of the Christian religion, was, that God has constituted as the Lord, Head, and Saviour of mankind, his son *Jesus Christ*.

III. You skip over the history of 3000 years, before we have another intimation of the supreme Godhead
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executed as a criminal, (*See* IS. BARROW'S *Sermon on the Passion*, p. 74, 75.) --- But you will observe that this was done "for us," that is, no doubt, *on our behalf, for our good*: it was not done for his own sake, it was done for us, *ὕπὲρ ἡμῶν*: and that we might be saved, as he repeatedly declared: See John x. 11. 15, &c. *I lay down my life ὑπὲρ for my sheep* --- 'That we might be made the righteousness of God in him:' that we might, *in and through Christ*, that is, *by the means* of his doctrine, example, and suffering, become reconciled and obedient to the divine will and law. And this explanation exactly accords with *ver. 15*. 'He died for (*ὕπὲρ*) all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves; but unto him who died for (*ὕπὲρ*) them, and rose again.' *i.e.* (*ver. 15.*) the end of his dying was, that we should live unto him that died for us: and (*ver. 21.*) the end of his dying was, that we should, through him, become righteous --- that we should practise such righteousness as God approves.

of Jesus Christ: we are then directed to Isa. ix. 5*— which passage, I conceive, will answer no better purpose to your cause than the last has done.—As the two appellations of *Mighty God*, and *Everlasting Father*, have the greatest stress laid on them, let us, for a moment, attend to them.

The two Hebrew words, composing the appellation *Mighty God*, are אל נבור, literally *God, Mighty*:—Aye, say you, a very plain proof that he is the supreme God: He would not be called so, if he were not so.—Hold, my friend, you may be mistaken. The names by which persons and things are called, do not always determine their *natures* --- if it were so, what would you do (among a thousand other instances) with the angel *Gabriel*, גבריאל: this was the name whereby that angel was called: And if אל נבור proves that our Lord was the supreme God, גבריאל will as effectually prove that that angel was the supreme God: and this, no doubt, will be multiplying deities beyond your wishes.

We have now to consider the other appellation, *Everlasting Father* --- אבי ער. The word *Everlasting*, is the important word here.—Now consult, I pray you, your Bible-- and you will find, that if the word ער signifies *everlasting* at all, it does by no means signify eternity, in the proper sense of the word, as including all that is past, present, and to come. Nay, it signifies but one of the three, and that is *time to come* †, *the future age*, *the world to come*, according to the Jewish sense of that phrase: as comprehending the whole of the mediatorial kingdom of Jesus Christ. The sense therefore seems clearly to be, that this *Child to*
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* See an exactly parallel passage, Luke i. 32.

† It is probably derived of ערה, *to pass*, and so refers to the motion of time onward.

be born, the wonderful Messiah, should be the leader and director of his people; that he should have *dominion* and *strength*, i. e. he should be a *mighty God*; he should be *exalted*, and *reign for ever* as the Head and Saviour of his people; he should be their *everlasting Father* and *Friend*.

... And what is there in all this to prove that he should be the Supreme God? Surely not one word! He was to be invested with dominion: "All power [*πᾶσα ἐξουσία*, all authority] in heaven and earth is *given unto me by my Father*," says our Lord: "He shall reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet," says Paul: "GOD hath *highly exalted him*, and *given him a name which is above every name*," says Paul again. --- Indeed, if you look through the whole of the New Testament, you will find, that whatever things are attributed to him, which exalt our notions of him as superior to a mere man, those things were *given unto him by the FATHER*. --- Nay, he even tells you, that the works, the miraculous works, which he did while on earth, were not done by his OWN power; whether you will consider him as God, or as a man: for he tells you, that the works that he did, were done by the *power of God*, the *finger of God*; that they were done not by the power of the Son, but by the power of the FATHER, who sent him.

IV. Isai. xii. 1, 2. come next under consideration. Upon this passage I shall only observe, that there does not appear to me to be any reason whatever for the application you have made of it, to the salvation you say our Lord obtained by being a sacrifice for sin. There is no doubt but that JEHOVAH was called the *Saviour*, and the *Salvation*, of the Jews, from the frequent interpositions of his providence and power, in delivering them from

from their neighbouring enemies: and there is no doubt but that this is the meaning here. You have made a most violent exertion in drawing this passage into the service of your cause. Besides, supposing it should appear that it is a reference to the salvation of Christ; yet, as Christ was the medium of that salvation *which God had appointed*, it would be very consistent with the language of Scripture, that this should be called (as it was in fact) *the salvation of God*.

V. *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*, from Jer. xxiii. 6. and chap. xxxiii. 16. next claim our attention --- יהוה צדקנו; the *Lord*, or *Jehovah our Righteousness*. I confess, at first sight, there appears a little difficulty in this passage: but I cannot allow, that this passage bears any other meaning than those other numerous ones, which speak of Christ as the Messenger, the Servant, the anointed Saviour of the great God, and as bearing his name and commission. And indeed, if we analyse the passages themselves, where these words occur, we shall probably find, that this is all they are intended to teach us --- "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, "that I will raise unto David a righteous branch: "and this is his name whereby he shall be called, "*Jehovah*, יהוה צדקנו, the Lord our Righteousness." The speaker here is *Jehovah*--- "Thus saith the Lord." We have here no intimation that there is more than one Jehovah. Jehovah says, *I will raise* --- Jehovah will raise. Raise what?---raise Jehovah? No---"I will raise unto David *a branch*." David was a man: a *branch* from this *stem*, must also be a *man*. It appears, that whatever *name* this branch should bear, he should be truly and properly a *man*, of the seed of David --- "And this is the name whereby he shall be called." Observe, Sir, he does not say --- *And this branch will*

will be JEHOVAH. Not a word like it. --- The prophet tells us merely, that he should be *called* so: it should be his *name*: --- It should be the name of the *branch*, the *man*; not the name of something which should be *superadded* to the *man*; but *the branch itself*, and not any thing else, should be *called* JEHOVAH. --- I do not conceive, however, that the words mean that this should be his common appellation. We know that appellation to have been JESUS CHRIST, "*the anointed Saviour*." --- What then does it mean? --- I think, the only fair and rational construction of it is this --- That this *branch of David*, whom God should raise up to be the Prince and Saviour of mankind, should be invested with Divine authority and power: God would be with him; and he should declare the glad tidings of salvation: he should publish the righteousness of God: he should be a preacher of righteousness, a dispenser of the immaculate law of God: he should himself be a righteous branch; his whole life should be a continued record of righteousness, benevolence, and truth: and, for these reasons, he should, in fact, be the means of displaying the righteousness of God to mankind, and of securing the righteousness of mankind towards God: --- he should emphatically be the way and means by which *Jehovah* would make known and establish his own righteousness, and by which he would promote and secure the righteousness of man.

And this is well expressed in the Chaldee paraphrase of this part of the verse --- *This is his name by which they shall call him; Righteousness shall be to us from the face of the Lord, in his days.*

But I think I hear you exult, and say --- "You have proved that this branch is a man. We acknowledge
"ledge

"ledge it --- we know he is a man --- and therefore
 "you have taken pains to prove that, which we
 "already believe, as much as you do." This I deny :
 You do not so firmly believe his manhood as Unitari-
 ans do. You say, that God and man are one Christ
 --- that in this one Christ there is but one *person* ---
 that this person is not the *human* person, but the *di-*
vine person --- that it is not the person of the man,
 but the second person in the Trinity. For, as with
 regard to the Trinity, you tell us, that there are three
 persons, and one essence --- so, with regard to the
 Messiah, you say, that there are two essences, and but
 one person. — And, I contend, that he is not a
 man who is a mere abstract essence, without a person,
 if such a thing were possible to exist : for it can by no
 means be admitted, that such a thing ever did exist ;
 seeing that Reason denies the possibility of it, and the
 Scriptures acquiesce in that denial, by not having
 even hinted at it. And however Trinitarians may pre-
 tend that they believe Christ to be a perfect MAN ---
 every one who considers the subject, must be con-
 vinced that they deny it. The Trinitarian doctrine,
 followed into its true consequences, stands thus : ---
No one is a man who hath not an human PERSON, but Christ
hath not an human person : therefore, Christ is not a man. —
 These doctrines of the unity of person, and abstract
 human essence in Christ, appear to be more strange
 than the doctrine of the Trinity. In the one, each
 person is said to have an essence, the essence being un-
 divided --- in the other, we have an essence without a
 person, and a person with a two-fold essence ; or, as
 the Creed says — " One altogether, not by confusion of
 substance, (or essence) ; but by unity of person." Thus
 men implicitly affect to believe, that which it is im-

possible we can form the most distant notion of:—For that which never did exist, and by the laws of nature never can exist, we can have no adequate conception of, and, of course, it cannot be an object of our faith.

But still it will be asked --- How comes he to be called *Jehovah*, יהוה, which is the incommunicable name of God?

I answer, that he is not called simply *Jehovah*; but, in the use of his name here, there is a something annexed to it, which shews its application --- *Jehovah our Righteousness* --- just as places formerly were denominated *Jehovah*, because of some singular instances of Divine power, or providence, which appeared or happened there; as, *Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord provideth*, Gen. xxii. 14. --- *Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord my Banner*, Exod. xvii. 15. --- *Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord of Peace*, Judges vi. 24. Ezek. xlvi. ult. *Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there*. So here, *Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our Righteousness*.

Now, if places could receive the name of *Jehovah*, because of some memorable instance of his interposition there; is it at all wonderful that He, in whom God hath so signally manifested himself to the world, and whom he hath set in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come --- I say, we cannot wonder if He, in whom God hath so visibly shewn himself, and whom he hath so highly exalted, should be denominated *Jehovah our Righteousness*.

Again, it is not something undefined which is named *Jehovah*: If it had been so, we might be led to understand by it the Supreme God. But we are prevented doing this; we have a character given to
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the person, which makes it incompatible with the idea of Supreme Divinity: for this very being, who is denominated *Jehovah-Tsidkenu*, is a *branch* of David; he should *spring from David's loins*; and should therefore be a *Man*: and if so, it is impossible that *Jehovah-Tsidkenu* can here signify the Supreme God.

Names were among the ancient Hebrews generally compounded of two or more words, describing the particular circumstances that gave rise to the name; and the word *Jehovah*, or God, very commonly formed a part of it. Of this we have a very applicable instance in the name of *Zedekiah*, which is compounded of the very words which compose the name here given to our Lord; except that the pronoun *גו*, is added to our Lord's name, *צדק-יהו*, *Tzidik-Jehovah*, the *Righteousness of Jehovah*. So *Jehoiakim*, *יהו-יקים*, *Jehovah will establish*. Again, *Jehoiachin*, *יהו-יכין*, *Jehovah will prepare*: and *Jeconiah*, 1 Chron. iii. 16. seems to be a transposition of the last name, *יכנ-יה*.—So Jacob calls a certain place *Peniel*, *פניאל*, the *Face of God*; because, says he, I have seen God face to face. And Jacob's name was changed from Jacob to *Israel*, *ישראל*, *prevailing with God*, because he had power with God: Gen. xxxii. 28.

To this arrangement may be added, the names *Isaiah*, *Josiah*, *Jeremiah*, *Zephaniah*, *Daniel*, *Lamuel*, *Abiel*, *Ezekiel*, *Samuel*, &c. &c. &c. An hundred instances of this nature, may be produced from the Old Testament.

VI. Zech. xiii. 7. “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd; and against the man that is *my fellow*, saith the Lord of hosts.” Whatever is meant by the words *my fellow*, it is plain that the person spoken of was a man—Awake, O sword, against the *man* who is *my fellow*.

Besides, you do not think the *impassible* Deity was *slain*. If you do, I very much doubt the divinity of your doctrine. Again, it is *Jehovah* who speaks : it does not seem that it was any particular person in the divine essence, who was speaking ; but merely *Jehovah*, intending simply and absolutely the one Supreme God. --- Now, *Jehovah* thus speaking of a man who was his fellow, cannot be understood to mean, that the man who was so his fellow, was that very *Jehovah* who was speaking : And if we do not carry it thus far, we do not make it signify enough to render it serviceable to the Trinitarian cause.

Perhaps you will say, (for so you must say, if you say any thing) either, “ that the manhood of Christ is called God’s fellow, by reason of the hypostatic union ; ” or, “ that the word *man*, signifies exclusively the manhood of Christ ---- and the words *my fellow*, his divinity.” Although both of these subtle evasions are incompatible with the words of the passage, and with common-sense, and therefore ought to be passed over in silence ; yet, let us consider them distinctly --- And first, you will say ; that the manhood of Christ is called God’s fellow, because of the hypostatic union. But how does this appear ? Where is the passage that speaks of such an union ? Where is your evidence of the fact ? --- I will answer for you. It is in such passages as this, upon which the very objection is founded, that you must find your proof of this union of two natures in one person : which reduces you to the dilemma of waiving an objection, by an appeal to the objection itself. — Your argument is, he is called God, and he is called man ; yet he was but one person : and therefore, he must be both God and man, in one person ; and *that* one person is the second in the Trinity. But do not you see, my friend, that
this

this is begging the question? Do not you see, that this is taking that for granted, which is the only point to be proved? Do not you see, that by this mode of reasoning, you establish a postulatum, where you ought to make a proof? Is there not less difficulty in conceiving that Christ is really a *man*; but that, on account of the Divine commission which he sustained, he is sometimes called a *God*?

If, therefore, no such hypostatic union can be supported, but by the imperious dogma of interested or prejudiced men --- I shall be bold enough to think for myself; and to take that side which has least difficulty, which is most consonant to Scripture in general, and which does least invade the rights of common sense: and I earnestly invite you to follow the example, and to do honour to the truth, by a chearful obedience to it.

There are many men in the world to whom nothing appears so strange, as that Divine truths should be perfectly understood: And the attachment these men have to religious doctrines, is proportioned to the degree of mystery there is in them: nay, they are fondest of those opinions which they least understand. — I do aver, if the Scriptures of the New-Testament are the foundations of the Christian faith, that Christianity is a plain, intelligible system ---- it is commensurate with the rational powers of men --- nay, it may be understood, even by the unlettered part of our fellow-mortals.

Let us now advert to the other objection, that the word *man*, signifies the manhood, and the words *my fellow*, the Godhead: And it is plain that this cannot be the fact, unless we suppose the hypostatic union to be dissolved; and there is no reason to suppose, that any more than one nature is here spoken of? The subject
spoken

spoken of, appears to be one only — the MAN — which very man was *Jehovah's* fellow. And, without there be in the union of the two natures, a confusion of substance, (which *Athanasius* denies) the *Man* cannot be called *JEHOVAH's* fellow, in the Trinitarian sense of the words; because they profess to prove his Divinity from these words: but that which had taken the manhood into itself, would be *Jehovah's* fellow --- and thus this objection is reprobated, in the words of the passage before us; which speak of the *man*, as God's fellow.

VII. John i. 14. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: all things were made by him, &c. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." Now, Sir, you will be pleased to observe, that if these words had been intended to teach the Deity of our Lord, it is likely the apostle would have used less exceptionable terms; he would have told us, at once, that *Jesus Christ* was the only true God. The word *God*, when used absolutely, must, if there be a Trinity in Unity, mean the whole Godhead: Let me ask you then, whether the apostle did so mean in this place? or whether he meant the Father and Holy Ghost; or whether he meant the Father only, with whom the Word was? If you say, that the term *God*, with whom the *Word* is said to have been, means the whole Godhead; you then exclude *the Word*, as a person, from the character of the Supreme God, or you must go a step farther than Trinitarians generally allow themselves to go, and that is, to distinguish the second person from himself: for though it is common with them to distinguish a person from the essence of that person, yet it is not usual for a person to be contradistinguished from himself. — If
you

you say the word God means the Father and Holy Ghost, I pray you to shew your reasons for that belief. And when you are doing this, give some plain and incontrovertible instances of this use of the word *God*. And I beg you will favour me in this way with that openness and candour which belong to you; for however dogmatical assertions may satisfy men who are willing to submit to any opinion the Church may dictate, they cannot, in the nature of things, satisfy a conscientious and enquiring mind.

I am perfectly persuaded, that the result of this enquiry will induce us to conclude, that by the term GOD in this text, the FATHER, the ONE SUPREME and LIVING GOD, is intended: And it will then follow, either that the Word is not a distinct being (or person) from the Father, and that this is a mere personification of the *Word* or *Wisdom of God*: or, that the Word is a distinct person, but God in an inferior and subordinate sense; as Judges, Magistrates, and others, are so termed: see Exod. vii. 1. Psal. lxxxii. 1. And either of these expositions, avoids that obscurity and difficulty which attend the Trinitarian construction, and renders the Scripture-doctrine concerning God the subject of rational faith, to the humble and honest enquirer.

“And the Word was made flesh.” Here is not a word about the manhood being taken into God, as *Athanasius* teaches us ---- Here is not a word about *personal union* --- not a word about a *union of natures* --- not a syllable about any *union* at all: The text says, the Word was *made* flesh, or became flesh. You will be pleased to observe, Sir, that neither are you told here, that he *took upon him* any *nature* at all, which was not his before.

VIII. You

VIII. You go on to say, "Our Lord is *the express image or character of the Father*"—So say the Scriptures, so Unitarians say ---but both you and they must also say, that the image of a thing is not the thing itself; and therefore, that which is the express image of God, cannot itself be God.

What the Chaldee paraphrasts and the Targum say, you are welcome to. They make nothing for, but against the cause you contend for.

IX. John, x. 30. "*I and my Father are one.*" -- *ver.* 38. and *chap.* xiv. 11. "The Father in me, and I in him." These passages you next produce: but these will not answer your end. If they prove any thing, they prove too much. Our Lord prays, *chap.* xvii. *ver.* 21. that all his disciples may be *one*. Now, if the declarations of our Lord, that the Father and he are one, do prove that they are one *nature*; then the prayer of our Lord, that his disciples might be one, must be a prayer that they might be of *one nature*: and thus, I say, they prove too much. And this observation is rendered substantial, if we pursue the words of that verse: "That they all may be one, *as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee*; that they also may be *one in us.*" So, *ver.* 22. "The glory which thou gavest me, I have given unto them; that they may be *one, even as we are one.*" These words, I say, do, in the clearest manner that words can, refute the supposed meaning of the passages you have quoted; to wit, that the Father and Son being said to be one, is a proof that they are one numerical essence.

X. "*All mine are thine, and thine are mine;*" *chap.* xvii. 10. This, I suppose, you think proves the co-equal Deity of our Lord: but if you read once more the 22d verse, which you have next quoted; you will

see

see how they became our Lord's---“ The glory which *thou gavest me.*” And *ver. 9.* --- “ I pray for them which *thou hast given me* ; for they are thine.” Here our Lord plainly tells us how they became his ; that is, by the *gift* of the Father. It is true, he tells us, that all those who were the Father's, are the Son's : but he also tells us, that the propriety in them is originally the Father's ; and that they became the Son's, because the Father *gave them to him.* The words of the learned Dr. WHITBY on this passage are very judicious, *ver. 10.* ‘ These words, he says, must bear this sense : All mine are thine, by *original* right ; and thine are mine, by *donation* : for so only can they accord with the preceding and the following words : “ Holy Father, keep, through *thine own name*, those whom *thou hast given me.*” And, *ver. 12.* “ Those thou *gavest me*, I have kept,” &c.’ So *ver. 7, 8, 9, &c.*---*Whitby's last Thoughts*, Disc. II. page 123.

And thus it follows, that these passages are a positive proof of the inferiority of the Son to the Father ; because, if they are become the Son's by the Father's gift, there must have been a time when they were not the Son's : and thus, I say, these passages prove that our blessed Lord is not the Supreme God. Finally, the 7th verse preaches the same doctrine ; but in different and yet stronger words : “ All things whatsoever thou hast *given me*, are *of thee*,” *i. e.* as the original, spring and fountain of all things.

The third verse of this 17th chapter of St. John, is the best key we can have for the understanding of this chapter : “ That they may know thee, the only true God ; and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”—— A learned author gives us a very accurate comment upon this passage ; which I shall take the liberty to

transcribe. ' In these words, (he says) our Lord
 ' certainly excluded himself from being the *only true*
 ' God: For he could never have prayed to the *Father*
 ' in these words, if *he* had been the *only true God* him-
 ' self, either in whole or in part. The word *THEE*
 ' being *personal*, plainly determines the *person* of the
 ' *Father* to be the *only true God*; not only in op-
 ' position to all other *substances*, but to all other
 ' *persons* also: And, as *all other persons* are hereby
 ' excluded *in general*; so, by the words immediately
 ' subjoined, the Son is excluded *in particular*: "Thee,
 ' the *only true God*; and *Jesus Christ*, whom thou
 ' hast sent." Now, nothing can be more plain, than
 ' that two persons are here spoken of: One person is
 ' the *only true God*; and the other *Jesus Christ*, whom
 ' the *only true God* hath sent. Hence, therefore, it
 ' appears, that the *person* of the *Father* is the *only true*
 ' God, by the express words of *Christ* himself; and
 ' that he excludes himself from that title, what-
 ' ever may have been since erroneously admitted as
 ' the *Christian doctrine*, by any of his mistaking fol-
 ' lowers. And therefore, supposing there may be
 ' *some* in the multitude of believers, as *ORIGEN*
 ' says, who rashly affirm our Saviour to be the *Su-*
 ' *preme God*: yet *We* affirm no such thing; but be-
 ' lieve him who hath said, *My Father is greater than*
 ' *I.*' — *Apol. of B. Ben Mordecai*, Letter III. p. 91.
 Edit. 4to.

XI. The apostle's words, Ph. ii. 6. next present them-
 selves: "Who, being in the form of God, thought
 it not robbery to be equal with God." That which is
 in the form of a thing, is not the thing of which it
 is the form: Therefore, *Jesus Christ* being said to be
 in the form of God, would lead us to suppose, that
 he was not that God in whose form he was. The
 word

word *form*, I know, in some places, signifies the substance; but here it certainly means a *similitude*, or *likeness*: because, although the word *form* may, in some instances, signify *substance*; yet, it has never been pretended that the words *likeness* and *fashion*, used in the same reasoning, bear that meaning: and these other words are used here in the same sense with the word *form*.

Again, it does not appear that the words “thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” are the true rendering of the Greek words — they rather mean, that he did not reckon it a prize, or acquisition, to be or appear as a God — Ος οεν μορφη Θεου υπαρχων — “Who being in the form of a God.” — Observe, the article does not precede the word *God*, as it does *ver. 9.* where the Supreme GOD is intended — and therefore, the proper rendering here is, the same as when the terms *a man*, *a servant*, are afterwards used — “*A God*,” who being in the form of a God — οχ αρπαγματον ηγησατο το ειναι ισου Θεου — *did not think or esteem it a prize, or acquisition, to be as a God*; as Antichrist did, 2 Theff. ii. 4. who exalted himself, and, as God, sitting in the temple of God, shewed that he is God. — See Plutarchus, Περὶ παιδων αγωγης, page 20. Edit. Græc. 8vo. Hen. Stephani, Edit. folio, Xylandri, page 12. for this sense of the word αρπαγμα. I dare say, you are aware that it is a word never yet met with but in those two instances, of *St. Paul* and *Plutarch**; and therefore,
you

* See TILLOTSON'S Works, page 525. where that learned man renders the words “*did not arrogate to himself to be equal with God.*” This, says he, I take to be the true meaning of this phrase; both because it is so used by Plutarch, and because it makes the sense much more easy and current: thus --- “Who being in the form of God, did not assume an equality with God, but he emptied himself,” &c. --- These words shew very clearly what

you must not lay much stress upon it—especially, when in this sense of a *prize*, or *acquisition*, it so much better suits the scope of the apostle's discourse than the word *robbery* does; and when, in the use Plutarch makes of it, it undoubtedly bears that meaning.—Again, the word *ως*, in this place, as in many others, signifies a *likeness*, or *similitude*; and, in this sense, enters very easily and pertinently into the apostle's reasoning—“Who being in the form, or invested with the authority of a God, did not esteem it a prize to appear as a God.” The passage is not, that he did not esteem it a prize, to be or appear as *ὁ Θεός*—*the God—the one God*—but *a God*, *Θεός* only; that is, *a divine person*.—This distinction, Sir, has been long ago remarked, both by *Origen* and *Eusebius*; it has therefore the sanction of pretty early antiquity.

And in this sense of the words, how pleasantly do the seventh and following verses support the apostle's reasoning; how naturally do they illustrate each other!—“Who being in the form, or sustaining the character of a God, or a divine Person, did not esteem it an acquisition not to be deserted upon any terms; but cheerfully accepted of the more inglorious appearance of a servant,” &c.

this worthy archbishop's ideas of the meaning of the text were; and that he did not understand them as the generality of Trinitarians do. Indeed, the sense adopted by TILLOTSON is that which the generality of Unitarians adopt; but in some degree I conceive they are both wrong. This construction understands the word God, *Θεός*, in the second instance, to mean the Supreme God; *he did not arrogate to himself to be equal with God*: Whereas, the sense seems clearly to be, that our benevolent Redeemer did not tenaciously wish to appear in all the dignity of a divine Messenger, but preferred the form of a *servant*---a *slave*---that he might the more effectually restore mankind to virtue---to happiness---and to God.

And

And this interpretation best suits the use of the adverbative particle *But*. This particle, when it comes before a positive proposition, is preceded by a negative one:—he *did not* do so and so; *but did* thus, &c. And so it is precisely with the context of this very passage — “Let *nothing* be done through strife, or vain glory; *but*, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves” — “Look *not* every man on his own things; *but* also on the things of others.” And then goes on — “Let the same mind (the same disposition) be in you which was in Christ:—he *esteemed* others better than himself—he *looked not* on his own things—he, though he was invested with a godlike authority, *did not esteem*, and *look* at that, as too much to be disregarded for the good of mankind; *but*, to obtain that benevolent end, took upon him the *form* of a SLAVE, &c.”

And the negative and affirmative propositions in these cases, must have a due relation to, and correspondence with each other: which cannot be the case, if we keep to the common translation — there will then be neither relation nor opposition. If it had been — “He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, for he really was equal to God” — it would have been intelligible, upon the Trinitarian hypothesis: but it is not intelligible to say, that he thought it not robbery to be equal to God, but took upon himself the form of a servant — for this, in plain language, is the same as if he had said, He thought it not robbery to be equal to God, but contrariwise; that is, instead of thinking it a robbery, he emptied himself; which is language no one can understand, for this plainest of all reasons; *viz.* because it has no meaning—it is nonsense.—The particle *But*, in this place, does not
signify

signify the same as *yet*, or *notwithstanding*, but the same as in the very sentence I am now writing; where it signifies *contrariwise*—*on the contrary*—*on the other hand*—*so far from it*. And this is not an unsupported declaration: I will prove that the one, and not the other, is the meaning; by appealing to this same apostle, in this same chapter, (*ver. 3, 4.*) when speaking on this same subject. —

v. 3. --- Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory --- *notwithstanding*, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.

v. 3. --- Let nothing be done through strife, or vain glory --- *on the other hand*, let each esteem others better than themselves.

v. 4. -- Look not every man on his own things --- *notwithstanding*, let him look also on the things of others. ---

v. 4. -- Look not every man on his own things --- *on the other hand*, let him look also on the things of others. ---

So in the passage we are considering —

Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of a God, thought it not a prize (a great acquisition) to be (*or appear*) in that glorious form: *notwithstanding*, he took upon himself the form of a servant, &c.

Let the same mind, &c.

 *on the other hand*, he took upon himself the form of a servant, &c.

By these examples it appears, that if we would understand the opposition the apostle here makes, we must take his meaning to be what we have just now expressed, viz. that he being in a glorious form, did not so value his own interest, was not so attached to his own happiness and prosperity, as to lose sight of the interests of mankind: on the other hand, he voluntarily debased himself in the eyes of mankind, and, for the good of others, assumed the form of a servant; he
 humbled

humbled himself, and voluntarily submitted to the most excruciating and disgraceful death. Thus did he "esteem others more than himself."—thus did he "avoid looking at his own things only, but looked also on the things of others:" and it is this mind--- this noble, this generous, this benevolent, disinterested and exalted mind --- which the apostle entreats the Philippians to possess.

And this is the only way in which the passage can be understood, to make it consist with common sense: Of course, the common interpretation of the words is futile, and renders the apostle's reasoning inconsistent and absurd.

XII. 1 Tim. ii. 3. "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour."—For an answer to this, see my observations on Isa. xii. 1, 2. If this will not satisfy you, be pleased to look to the 5th verse of this chapter to Timothy, where the apostle tells you, that this God the Saviour is not Jesus Christ; but that he who is God the Saviour, is one of the parties between whom Jesus Christ is the Mediator: for the apostle, in the 4th and 5th verses, proves how he is the Saviour: "*he* will have all men to be SAVED, and "to come to the knowledge of the truth: *For* there is "one God, and one Mediator between God and man, "the MAN Christ Jesus."

I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your sincere friend,

And humble servant,

G. C.

 LETTER III.

REV. SIR,

I DARE say you will agree with me, that, in order to discover the true meaning of Scripture, the context should be duly considered. A want of regard to this point is the spring of all errors; and it is the duty of teachers, particularly, to give close attention to it. The learned Dr. WORTHINGTON, in his *Miscellanies*, p. 9. has an excellent observation on this head, which is fully verified in the course of these Letters,—and which I shall beg leave to transcribe. He says—

‘ I have observed this *ἡ ἱμαξ* (ut mollissimè loquæ) in
 ‘ too many authors; who are wont to mention only
 ‘ so much of a Scripture paragraph as is more general,
 ‘ and apt to be smoothed with some handsomer ap-
 ‘ pearance and compliance with their hypothesis, with-
 ‘ out giving an account of the other particulars which
 ‘ are most material and important. This ariseth from
 ‘ an undue affection they have to themselves, and
 ‘ some *idola specus*, particular notions of their own,
 ‘ which they would have to be true; and hence they
 ‘ catch at some single expression or phrase, which seems
 ‘ to be more plausible and capable of serving their turn,
 ‘ but in the mean time look off, or take no notice of
 ‘ the general scope, or main importance of the para-
 ‘ graph, and give no account of the other particulars,
 ‘ which, though more material and considerable, are
 ‘ not

* not so pliable and serviceable to their hypothesis ;—
 * nay, indeed, if *impartially* and *closely* considered, would
 ‘ quite overthrow it.’

I. The passage we are next to consider in this controversy, is 1 Tim. iii. 16. “ Great is the mystery of
 “ Godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified
 “ in the Spirit,” &c.—Sir ISAAC NEWTON*, and
 others, have proved, that Θεός (God) is an interpolation, and that it was originally, and therefore should
 now be ο, *which*: this has, I say, been most abundantly
 proved. This passage is therefore a slender evidence
 for you—But let this be laid aside for a moment, and
 we will appeal to the internal evidence of the text itself; and then we shall find that if the apostle had left
 off with the declaration that *God was manifest in the
 flesh*, there would be no difficulty in understanding him
 as speaking of the true God himself, and of that peculiar
manifestation of Him, which was made by JESUS
 CHRIST, while in the flesh, and dwelling amongst us:
 —but as it goes on to other matters which are incompatible with our ideas of the Great Divinity, we must,
 even if we admit the word Θεός as the genuine reading,
 of necessity understand it as directing our views to
 some person of exalted dignity, who was not the Supreme God. — These other points are, that *God*, or
the Gospel, or whatever is there spoken of, was *justified
 in the Spirit*, *seen of angels*, *preached unto the Gentiles*, *believed on in the world*, *received up into glory*. And admit
 that the true GOD is meant in this passage, it must
 then be understood not only that GOD was manifest
 in the flesh—but that GOD was justified in the Spirit
 —GOD was seen of angels—GOD was preached unto

* See his Letter to Mr. LE CLERC.

the Gentiles—God was believed on in the world—God was received up into glory. Now, these things will not consist with our ideas of the Divinity : The attestation of the Divine power, or *justification of the Spirit*, was an attestation to the truth of the Gospel published by Christ—The being seen of angels, if we understand that God is meant, is contrary to the express declarations of Scripture, that “ No one hath seen God at any time.”—That God was *preached unto the Gentiles*, carries no improper sense with it ; but it is more in point to the apostle’s reasoning and language, and the general sense of the language of the New Testament, if we understand that the *Gospel* was preached to them ; — and that God was *believed on in the world*, is not so suited to the apostle’s reasoning, as that the *Gospel* of Jesus Christ (which *Gospel* is the *mystery* of Godliness, *manifested*, or made known to us) was believed in the world—— And it is utterly inconsistent with our ideas of an omnipresent Deity, that *he* should move from one place to another, and so be received or taken up into heaven !

The sense of this passage will be more plain, if we run through the whole of it in the sense which it evidently bears.— ‘ Great (says the apostle) is the *mystery* of Godliness, or of the Gospel ; which was manifested, or made known to us, by the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, and which was attested, or justified as the truth, at various times, by the miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit. This Gospel the very angels of God desired to look into, and beheld with admiration—this Gospel was preached among the Gentiles, was credited by them, and met with a glorious acceptance and reception.’

And

And this sense of the passage is supported by the words of it : for the words which we render ‘ believed on in the world,’ as though it were a person who was the subject of that belief, should be rendered *believed in the world*, *ἐπιστεύθη ἐν κόσμῳ*, that is, the Gospel was believed : and being *received up into glory*, should, in conformity with the rest of the verse, be rendered *received in glory*, *ἀνελήφθη ἐν δόξῃ*. There is certainly nothing in the words which can lead us to suppose, that the reception of any thing into heaven is intended ; but that they merely point out the glorious reception of the Gospel among the Gentiles.—And, in all this, what proof have we of the Supreme DEITY of Jesus Christ? — You may perhaps say, that the verse is explained away ; but this is easier said than proved.—Go to work, my friend, and determine for yourself, which mode of interpretation offers the least violence to your understanding.—See 2 Cor. iii. 7 to 12. where *ἐν δόξῃ* is translated *glorious*. So it should be *glorious riches*, Phil. iv. 19. and in this place a *glorious reception*.

II. Heb. i. 8. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*—The proper way of understanding this, and all other passages of Scripture, is to take it in its connexion.—Let us pursue this plan here.—*Ver. 4.* informs us that the Son of God was *made* so much better than the angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they : And then the apostle goes on to prove this very point.—Now observe, Sir, we are informed here, that whatever glory or dignity he had, was not a glory incident to his nature, or a natural right—for at the same time that we are told that he was better than the angels, we are also told that he was *made* so ; and that the more excellent name he has, was a name he had *obtained*. Let us

examine the words by this clue; and we shall find, that if this passage means to point out the Supreme Godhead of our blessed Redeemer, it does, at the same time, contradict every other sentence in the chapter, and destroys the whole force of the apostle's reasoning. He goes on to prove his point—*For* unto which of the angels said he, (God) at any time, “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee”—And again, “I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.”—(This first of the more excellent names which he obtained, was *the Son of God*)—And again, “when he (God) bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” Surely, these are words very unsuitable to a description of the true God—they contain a further proof of the dignity to which God had raised his Son. — “And of the angels, he saith, who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. — But unto the Son he (God) saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom—thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; *therefore* God, even *thy* God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness — (See Psal. ii. ver. 6. Hath conferred regal authority upon thee,) *above thy fellows,*” &c. &c. It will not, I hope, be said, that this whole description is applicable to the Supreme Divinity—and if the whole is not, then, I contend that no part of it can be; because the apostle is describing one person only, who was the Son of God.

Besides this, there remains a difficulty, which, added to what has been already said, places this passage very far from the probability of its being decisive in your favour. The Greek words are, Ο Υιός σου, ὁ Θεός, ἐκ

τοῦ θronου τῆς βασιλευς—In considering the true import of these words, we must leave the pointing out of the question. The way in which it is pointed in our Greek Testaments, certainly makes it the vocative case; but it is equally true, that the way in which the Seventy point it, makes it the nominative: And in this way the reasoning would be, “God is thy throne for ever and ever;” *that is*, thy throne and dominion of righteousness, are established and founded by God. And this very well accords with other passages which speak of this subject. See 2 Sam. vii. 13. 16.—1 Chron. xvii. 12. 14.—Psal. lxxxix. 4.

A case very similar to this, and which justifies these observations, occurs in the very next verse of this same chapter; where it is said—“Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee,” &c. which might be rendered agreeably to the common rendering of the passage under consideration—*Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee*, &c. But the present rendering, in this place, seems to be the true one; and rendering the other in the same way, will make the whole sense consistent and compleat—“God hath established thy throne”—he hath invested thee with regal dignity—And for what reason? “Thou hast loved righteousness; *therefore* God, thy God, hath anointed thee”—therefore he hath established thy throne—for this very reason, he hath conferred regal dignity upon thee.

Once more, let us, for a moment suppose the present rendering to be the true one; and even then it will appear most amply, that the accommodation of the term GOD, in this place, to our blessed Lord, will not prove that he is the one Supreme God: And that for this plain and convincing reason; *viz.* That the very *throne*, or *dominion*, of which the apostle speaks, appears to be not his by *nature*, but by *donation*—the
gift—

gift—of the Supreme Being, who *made him* both *Lord* and *Christ*: for the apostle, after having spoken of his throne, or seat of dominion, immediately informs us, (lest we should adopt the sense which Trinitarians espouse) that his dominion was through the appointment of HIM who was *his* GOD. Thou hast loved righteousness; *therefore* God, *THY* God, hath anointed thee; *i. e.* for this reason thy throne is established—for this reason he hath appointed thee to this regal dignity and power; as Christ himself, in another place, tells us, when he says --- “All power in heaven and earth, is *given* unto me by my Father.” And if this dominion was not his by nature, but by the gift of a superior being; we have a most convincing proof that the use of the word *God*, in this place, does not prove that Jesus Christ is the one eternal God.

God, (says a respectable author) when applied to the Father, denotes Him who alone has all perfections, and all power and dominion, absolutely and of himself; original, underived, and independent on any--- and who does all things according to the counsel of his own will: which is the primary, absolute, and supreme sense of the word. But when it is applied to the *Son*, it denotes one who has *not* his *perfections*, *power*, and *dominion* of himself, original and underived, and independent on any; but has them all derived to him from *another*, and always acts and wills in compliance with the will of *another*. In which case it is manifestly used in a *subordinate* sense only.—*Clarke's Reply to Dr. Waterland's Defence*, page 171.

Nor must we permit the plain reasons which the apostle here gives of our Lord's exaltation, to be hidden in the mazes formed by the wild fancy of Bigotry. I know it will be said, that “all these indications of
infe-

inferiority, regard Christ in his mediatorial capacity; and he should be considered as God-man, as in a state of humiliation, if we would understand the meaning of them."—But this must be wholly denied, in that the apostle is not here describing what Christ was in his state of *humiliation*; but what he is in his *highest state* of EXALTATION—he is describing him as a King, as the Son of God, as exalted far above all principality and power, and every name that is named: Indeed, he is labouring, (if I may so speak) to describe the most lofty titles which our Lord bears, and the highest dignity and glory he sustains. So little of truth, and so much of error, is there in this common salvo for Trinitarian difficulties.

III. Rev. i. 8. — *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.*

I suppose you mean to intimate, that this description belongs to our Lord.—I think it does not; and my reason for so thinking is, that in the 4th and 5th verses of this chapter, the Supreme God, who is there described so emphatically, as *he who is, and was, and is to come*, is so described in direct contradistinction to Jesus Christ, who is called the faithful Witness, and First-begotten of the Dead: and, in the 6th verse, this same Supreme God, is called HIS (Christ's) *God and Father*; for so the words *τω Θεω και πατρι αυτου*, should be rendered. It is not therefore very probable, that he who is expressly contradistinguished, in the 4th and 5th verses, from the Supreme God, *who was, and is, and is to come*; and which Supreme God, in the 6th verse, is called HIS God, should, in the 8th verse, bear the same appellation, which so very recently had served to distinguish him from the Supreme God. Besides,
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this distinction is equally evident in the very first verse; where we are told, that this book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which ὁ Θεός (God) gave unto him; which is a pretty manifest proof that ὁ Θεός, and *Jesus Christ*, were not one and the same *being*: for had *Jesus Christ* been the Supreme Deity, he had not needed to have knowledge communicated to him from any other.

And if the Son of God is afterwards called the *first and last—the Alpha and the Omega*, (which, by the bye, is not a very clear case *) *ver. 11. 17.* yet, if we would make sense of the whole of the sayings in this chapter, we must of necessity understand them as used in some other inferior sense, than when used of the Supreme Deity. See *chap. iii. ver. 11.* where he is called *the chief, or first of the creation of God*; and also *ver. 5.* of this first chapter, where he is called *the first-begotten of the dead*. See also, *chap. xxii.* where John tells us, that the angel rebuked him, *ver. 9.* for falling down to worship him: “See (says he) that thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book; **WORSHIP GOD.**” And yet it appears, by the 13th verse, as if this angel bore the appellation of *the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*; and the 16th verse seems to intimate, that this angel who forbade John to worship him, and who directed him to worship God, was Jesus Christ: for the same person appears to be still speaking, and yet he immediately adds—“I, Jesus, have sent

* It is certain, that there is great reason to doubt the validity of these words in the 11th verse. See the following Authors on the subject; namely, *Mill, Bengelius, Westein, and Griesbach.*

mine angel.”—These sudden transitions are very frequent in this book, and involve it in a great deal of difficulty; particularly, as to those who are represented speaking—and this should make us extremely cautious how we build articles of faith upon such obscure and dubious foundations, and should direct our views to the plain and intelligible parts of Scripture.

IV. Rev. xix. 13. 16. The appellation here given to Christ is, that he is “King of Kings, and Lord of Lords;” or, as it is elsewhere, *chap. i. 5.* expressed, “The Prince of the Kings of the earth.” For an exposition of this passage, I refer you to the following passages:—Luke i. 32. “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the *Lord God shall* GIVE unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Israel for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end;”—Matth. xxviii. 18. “All power, *ἐξουσίας*, authority, in heaven, and in earth, is given unto me by my Father:”—Acts ii. 34 to 37. David himself saith, “The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right-hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool: therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that *God hath made* that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord and Christ.*” See also my observation on Heb. i. 8. where it appears that the regal dignity was *conferred* upon him by the most high God—Also, John xvii. 22. “The glory *which thou gavest me*”—And, Eph. i. 21. “*Hath set* in heavenly places, far above all *principality and power, &c.*”

V. You now set about to prove, that divine worship is due to Christ—And your first proof is from Phil. ii. 10. “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” I conceive that these words do

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neither

neither mean that he should be worshipped with divine worship, nor, that in the name of Jesus every one should worship the Father. If it refers to worship at all, it must mean that worship should be paid to Jesus Christ—yet it appears equally plain, that it cannot be divine worship, such worship as we pay to the Supreme over all; but a subordinate, inferior worship, such as we pay to kings and princes. And that this is the case, appears by two very potent reasons: The first is, that this state of dignity which our Lord enjoys, is not a dignity natural to him; it is a dignity to which he hath been *raised*. We are told just before, that because of his sufferings and death, God — (observe, GOD) — hath highly exalted him; and (GOD) hath *given him* a name above every name: that at the name of Jesus, &c. Now, observe, my good Sir, that here the apostle gives the reason why God hath so highly exalted him; and that is, *in order that* (for so the word *that* signifies) at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess, &c.—But, secondly, it is apparent that this worship, or adoration, is not to be supreme worship, or adoration; inasmuch as that the end of this adoration, or worship, was not the dignifying of our Lord Jesus Christ—it was not for the glorifying of him—but for the manifestation of his glory, who was his FATHER and GOD: for thus the apostle adds, “That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the *glory of God the Father*.”

I am inclined, however, to think, that the apostle does not there speak of *worship* in the sense in which that word is generally used; but rather of that dominion and power to which our Lord was exalted; and, of course, that the *bowing of the knee* to Christ, and
confessions

confession of him as Lord, refers to the subjugation of all things to his rule and dominion. And in this sense of the words, this passage is most beautifully illustrated by this same apostle, in the 15th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, *ver.* 24th, &c.—“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and authority, and power: for he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet—the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that hath put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” Here Christ is represented as exercising his dominion and authority, to which God had raised and exalted him: and it appears that in the exercise of his dominion, every knee should bow, or become subjected to him, and should acknowledge him to be the Lord and Governor of all; but this should be to *the glory of the FATHER*, or, in other words, it should be, that the supreme and ever-blessed God, *should be All in All*.

The paraphrase of Mr. ALEXANDER upon these verses, is truly excellent, and apposite to the point in question; and its beauty will be a sufficient apology for my introducing it here.—“Then cometh the end, and full completion of the promises which God hath made to his Messiah; when Christ shall deliver the kingdom, which has so long been possessed by others, to God, even the Father; when he shall abolish all empire, dominion and authority, which now subsist throughout the world, and remove every thing

‘ out of the way which opposes itself to his greatness.
 ‘ For he must reign till God hath put all things under
 ‘ his feet. He shall be a King for ever, and triumph
 ‘ over all his enemies. Such is the extent of the
 ‘ divine commission, and such the unchangeable pur-
 ‘ pose of Eternal Wisdom and Goodness. Death, the
 ‘ last and most formidable enemy of mankind, shall also
 ‘ be destroyed, and no more be liable to resume his do-
 ‘ minion over the righteous. For God hath subjected
 ‘ all things to the power and rule of his Anointed.
 ‘ But when he saith, that all things are put under his
 ‘ feet, it is past a doubt that this must be understood
 ‘ with an exception of the Eternal Being, whose un-
 ‘ controuled and all-subduing energy, hath reduced
 ‘ them to this state of homage and subjection. When
 ‘ therefore all things, throughout the whole circle of
 ‘ the world to come, shall be submitted to the Son,
 ‘ and he shall be advanced to the utmost pitch of great-
 ‘ ness; even then, as much as before, shall the Son
 ‘ himself be subject to the Father — so that God shall
 ‘ be all in all—the supreme object of reverence and
 ‘ worship—the only stay and confidence of his re-
 ‘ deemed—and the single undisputed source of their
 ‘ happiness and joy.’

VI. Heb. i. 6 —“ And when he bringeth in the first-
 begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels
 of God worship him.”—This, and the passages you have
 quoted from the Revelations, do at most prove, that
 Jesus Christ, as the exalted Redeemer, is an object of
 subordinate reverence. He is God’s anointed King;
 therefore, he is worthy of worship, of honour, and
 glory. But he is not intitled to that supreme worship,
 honour, and glory, of which God, who so anointed
 him, is worthy.—God, who is the Supreme over all,

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is worshipped and glorified, because he is the fountain of all existence, and the original, indefectible source of all goodness—And our ever-blessed Lord and Saviour is worshipped and glorified because he was slain, and by his obedience restored mankind to God. —

This distinction is very visibly supported, Rev. vii. 9. to the end — “ After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before *the throne*, and before *the Lamb*, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried, with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our GOD, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the LAMB. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our GOD for ever and ever, Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of GOD, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the *Lamb*, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and *God* shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

VII. Rev.

VII. Rev. xi. 17. certainly means the Supreme God, even the Father.

You now go on to observe, that “these are evident and decisive proofs in favour of this fundamental principle of the Christian religion.” That they are *evident* and *decisive* proofs, you will perhaps, by this time, begin to doubt—unless you are like those whom you have described as having sinister purposes to serve; who are endued with more subtlety than honesty, and more sophistry than argument; which I am far from being inclined to believe.—I am far from wishing to impeach your honesty; I am sure the words do not apply to your character: Yet, however honest you may be in your intentions, let me entreat you to cherish another qualification, equally necessary for an enquirer after truth; and that is *Candour*. We should recollect that none of us are infallible—and that it is possible for other men to be as honest as ourselves.

VIII. Let us now proceed to what you have said concerning the Divinity of the Holy Ghost.—You say, “the Divinity of the Holy Ghost is frequently expressed, and universally implied, throughout the sacred writings.”—In this I heartily concur with you; and therefore shall not trouble myself to repeat the passages you have produced to prove that the Holy Ghost is God.

But I as expressly deny your other principle; which is very like the doctrine of *Arius*, (except that, I fear, it is infinitely more dangerous): and that is, that the prophet Isaiah, under the Old Testament dispensation, believed the Spirit to be a self-existent being, distinct, or separate, from the Father and the Son.—Now, for a moment, examine your principles. You say—“the
Holy

Holy Ghost is a self-existent being, *distinct*, or *separate*, from the Father and the Son.”—I suppose you will not hesitate to make the same declaration concerning the Father and Son; *viz.* that they are *distinct*, or *separate*, SELF-EXISTENT BEINGS.—Admit this, and we have *Tritheism* announced, in the strongest terms it can be expressed—a SELF-EXISTENT *Father*, distinct, or separate, from the Son and Holy Ghost—a SELF-EXISTENT *Son*, distinct, or separate, from the Father and Holy Ghost—and a SELF-EXISTENT *Spirit*, distinct, or separate, from the other two. And what renders this definition of yours more affecting, is, that you have taken very great pains to put your meaning out of all doubt, in explaining the word “*distinct*” by the word “*separate*;” seeing that that being, who is not only *distinct*, but *separate* from another, cannot, (in the opinion of sober men) be the same being, but another being. Nay, even your Trinitarian brethren will contend against you, that you have done their cause much wrong; in that, although you declare the Holy Spirit to be the Supreme God—yet that you have made him a distinct, a separate, and an independent God.

The passages you have collected, to prove something concerning the Holy Spirit, evidently mean one thing; and therefore you must be answered (as to the purposes for which you have produced them) in one general way; *that is*, by shewing that *the Spirit of God* means *the power of God*—and that not only the Holy Spirit is sometimes spoken of as a person; but that other expressions, or things, by which the same Energy or Spirit of God is intended, are also personified.

And that the *Holy Spirit* of God, and the *power*, or *energy* of God, are one thing, is very clear, if we will refer

refer to the words of our Lord himself, as represented by the different Evangelists, where that which, in one passage, is called the *Spirit* of God, Matth. xii. 28. is in another, called the *power* of God, Luke ix. 43. and elsewhere, the *finger* of God, Luke xi. 20. And, no doubt, the Spirit of God is intended, when, in Luke v. 17. it is said, that “the *power* of the Lord was present to heal the sick;” and, chap. vi. 19. when it is said, that “*Virtue* went out of Christ, and healed them.”—So chap. viii. 46.—See also, Job x. 8. compared with Job xxxiii. 4.

And it is equally clear, that those other terms by which the *Spirit*, or *energy* of God, is meant, are personified—Thus, (Isa. li. 9.) where the arm of the Lord is used for his power, it is said, “*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!*”—So, Luke xxii. 69. the power of God is spoken of as having *hands*. “Hereafter (says our Lord) shall the Son of man sit at the *right-hand* of the *power* of God.”—Nay, turn to 1 Cor. ii. 11. and you will find, that the *Spirit of a man* is personified, as well as the Spirit of God; and in certain instances, much to our present purpose, are, by the apostle, represented as not unfimilar—“What man (saith Paul) *knoweth* the things of a man, save the *SPIRIT of a man*, which is in him?—EVEN SO, the things of God *knoweth* no one, but the *SPIRIT of God.*”

And although it be true, that impersonal things may, and frequently are in the Scriptures, spoken of as though they were persons; yet we never find, to the best of my recollection, that persons are spoken of as though they were things; *that is*, the neuter gender is not used of persons in any instance, I believe, throughout the New-Testament, (except, perhaps,
when

when men are spoken of metaphorically) or in any other writer whatsoever; and yet we frequently may observe, that the *Holy Spirit* is spoken of in this way, in the constant use of the words *Holy Spirit*; and in the equally constant use of the neuter pronoun, where the substantive-noun is not repeated; as your own researches may easily convince you.—Let me, however, just observe, that the pronoun which, in our translation, John xiv. 17. is rendered *he*, is in the original *it*, and should be so rendered. This part of our argument, therefore, appears to me to stand exactly thus:—“The holy Spirit of God is sometimes spoken of as a person; which is nothing unnatural, or improper; supposing that the Spirit of God means his POWER, INFLUENCE, OR ENERGY; because frequent instances occur, in various writers, of the use of the figure called *prosopopæia*, or the representing things as persons; and therefore, we may reasonably conclude, that the terms *Holy Spirit*, mean the Divine ENERGY, OR POWER: and it seems that this principle is abundantly verified, in that the Holy Spirit is frequently spoken of as a *thing*: as an *attribute*, or *quality*, of the DEITY; which is a usage utterly unknown, when that of which we speak is really a *person*: from whence it follows very naturally, that the Holy Ghost is not a Divine *person*; but the *arm*, *spirit*, *power*, *influence*, or *energy* of GOD.

Let me beseech you to re-consider this point, concerning the impersonality of the Holy Ghost; and let me press upon you to consider particularly, the observation I have just now made; *to wit*, that although it is not unusual to personify *things*; yet, that it never happens that *persons* are spoken of *impersonally*, or, in other words, it may be truly said, that there is scarce a *thing*, in the whole region of Nature, which has not

been represented in the language we would use of *persons*—but there is no instance of a *person* who has been represented to us in the language we use of *things* which are not persons, except when metaphors are used—And yet it turns out, that the holy Spirit of God is generally represented to us not in the language we use when we speak of persons; but in the language we use when we speak not of persons, but of things. Once more, I entreat you to consider attentively this point; for it appears to me to be so decisive upon the question before us, that there need not be any further argument than this, to convince an unprejudiced mind, that the holy Spirit of GOD is the Divine *influence*, and not a Divine *person*.

X. You seem to lay a particular stress upon Isa. xlviii. 16. “The Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me,” *Jehovah-Aleim*.—Now, if *Aleim* means the whole Trinity of persons, the term *Spirit* here cannot mean another person; so that the sense which you impose on these words, is inconsistent with your own construction of the Hebrew אֱלֹהִים. Besides, it is very plain, that a person is intended by these words, *Jehovah-Aleim*; and that person is said to have a spirit. Now, it is a little incongruous that the *spirit of a person* should be another person:—And it would be more intelligible to common capacities, if we were to understand, by these words, *his Spirit*, some *virtue*, *quality*, or *attribute* of that person. And, beyond doubt, this is the true meaning of the words; and they are to be understood in the same way as though he had said, *The Lord, by his Spirit, hath sent me*; or, *the Lord hath sent me*—Or, *I am sent by the power and authority of Jehovah*; *I am sent by the Spirit of the Lord*. In this way the conjunction-copulative is frequently used—as, Job xxxiii. 4. “The Spirit of God hath made me, AND the breath of the Almighty

Almighty hath given me life"—where the *Spirit* of God, and the *breath* of the Almighty, mean precisely the same thing.—So, 1 Chron. xvi. 11. David, in his psalm of thanks, uses these words: "Seek the Lord AND his STRENGTH;" where the word *strength* bears the meaning of the word *spirit*, and signifies just the same as if he had merely said, "Seek the Lord." So also, Psal. cv. 4.—and Isa. xl. 10. where the word ARM, which signifies the Divine energy, is used.—"The Lord God will come with a strong hand, AND his ARM shall rule for him."—These passages, I conceive, are exactly similar to that which you have quoted, and upon which you formed your very extraordinary declaration, that the Holy Spirit is a *self-existent being, distinct, or separate*, from the Father and the Son. There is, my friend, precisely the same reason for arguing, from the words of David, 1 Chron. xvi. 11. That the *strength of the Lord* is a self-existent being, distinct from the Father and the Son; or, from Isa. xl. 10. to say, that the *arm of the Lord* is such a person; especially, as it is in this last place said, that the arm of the Lord *shall rule*; which is a personal act. But as the *breath* of the Lord, the *strength* of the Lord, the *arm* of the Lord, and the *finger* of the Lord, mean the Divine energy; I see no sufficient reason why the Spirit of the Lord should not mean the same thing.—And it may not be improper to observe here, that if that which you so earnestly contend for, were TRUTH, the proof of it would not be left to arbitrary and ambiguous deductions.

XI. In a very few lines you now *prove*, or rather *attempt to prove*, what you call the essential and important doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. Your first effort is from Gen. i. 1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The stress of your

argument lies upon the word אֱלֹהִים, which you say denotes a plurality of persons in the Godhead. — But why (if it is any thing more than an Hebraism) have you not told us why it signifies a plurality of *persons*, rather than a plurality of *powers*; especially, as the Hebrew אֵל, from which most authors say the word is derived, signifies *power*, or *strength*?

There are, however, several reasons which weigh with me against your construction of the word *Aleim*. — This very word is applied to *Moses*, in the same way in which it is applied to the Supreme Deity, Exod. vii. 1. “ I have made thee; אֱלֹהִים, *Aleim*, God to Pharaoh:” and also to *Judges*, Exod. xxi. 6. and xxii. 9. and, lastly, to *Angels*, Psal. xcvi. 7. and viii. 5. — And it is a very satisfactory reason with me to reject the plural signification of this word, אֱלֹהִים, when used of the true God, that whenever Christ, or his apostles, had occasion to quote the words of the Old Testament, where this word was used, they always render it, as the Seventy have done, by the singular, Θεός. This is a plain proof that neither the Seventy, nor our blessed Lord, or his apostles, had discovered that the mystery of the Trinity was couched in this word. — And for proof that this was their practice, you will be pleased to refer to Heb. i. 8, 9. which is a quotation from Psal. xlv. 6, 7. and there you will find, that the word אֱלֹהִים is rendered *singular*—and also, to Mark xii. 29. where Deut. vi. 4. is quoted, and where the word אֱלֹהִים is also rendered by the singular, Θεός. See also quotations, Matth. xxii. 32. and Acts vii. 32. where the word is rendered in the same way.—And you will not forget, that the Hebrews frequently used to express the singular number by a word of a plural form: See Deut. xxiv. 6. רֶחֶם, *the nether mill-stone*—Exod. xi. 5. חֲרִיִּים, *the mill*—and Psal. xc. 6. עֲרִירִים, *noon-day*.

day. So also, דם, in the *singular*, and דמים, *plural*, are indiscriminately used for *blood*. And indeed, the word אדון, which signifies a *Lord*, or *Master*, is used in a plural form of one person, in the instance of Joseph, אדני-הארץ, “the Lord of the Land,” Gen. xlii. 30. and also, chap. xl. 1.—This word אדון, is one of the names of the Deity—and, if you please, the word אלהים is frequently used of a single person, as you will find by consulting Gen. i. 26.—Exod. vii. 1.—Judg. xiii. 16. 22. But this would not be the case, if it were a word formed for the purpose of teaching a *plurality* of persons in the Deity: for it would then be the means of destroying its own evidence. Indeed, this seems to be a very strong presumptive proof (to say the least of it) against your ideas of the meaning of the word—and therefore it shall be repeated; viz. that if the word אלהים, were a word formed for the purpose of *teaching*, by a direct sort of evidence, a *plurality* of persons in the Divine essence, it must of necessity destroy its own evidence, if it is ever used of a *single* person; seeing that the application of it to a single person, proves that it may, without any impropriety, be used in a singular sense. And, from these premises, I should be inclined to argue, that if the divine writers saw no impropriety in the use of this word, when speaking of a single person, they had no idea of its being necessarily to be understood of more than one—and that, as we are sure the word is used in some places of a single person, we have very great reason to believe that it is generally so used.—Having got thus far, I should find it no difficult matter to believe, that the use of it with verbs and pronouns, in a *singular* form, is conclusive evidence, that when it is applied to the Deity, we must

must understand it as used of a being, or person, who is simply and absolutely ONE.

XII. "Let us make man," &c. *ver.* 26.—Your supposition here is, either that God spake to himself, or that one person in God spake to another person in God. But, in order to support either of these notions, you must also suppose that there were two wills, and two understandings, in God: but this you should prove, as well as suppose.—It does not, however, appear to me, that Moses meant to teach us, that God really *spake* at all—it is rather a familiar mode of teaching us, that it was the Divine will and pleasure to create the human race. At any rate, it is not declared to whom God spake; the utmost, therefore, we can do is to guess at it: and in that guess we may possibly be *right*, but very probably *wrong*. And it seems a little extraordinary, that a thing *guessed* at, should be adduced in a serious way, as a *Scriptural evidence* of the truth of a disputed doctrine—of a doctrine which contradicts all our experience and knowledge.—*I leave you to consider, in your serious moments, whether your own time and labour; and the time, the labour, and the understandings of your readers, are not grossly abused and insulted by this practice.*

If, however, we should be obliged to have recourse to the difficulty you have raised, and it should appear that the angels are meant—it would be nothing new, or very extraordinary: the learned Rabbi MAIMONIDES, long ago, considered this matter in this point of view. His words are these:—"God is described as
 "acting by the mediation of angels, (as Numb. xx.
 "16. Judg. ii. 4. Psal. civ. 4. Dan. vi. 22, &c.)
 "Hence our wise men have observed upon these passages of the law, *Let us make man in our image*, and
 "Let us go down and confound their language—that God
 "does

“does nothing without deliberating (if we may so speak) in his council. Not that God discourses or consults with any one; but to shew, that he chooses to employ the ministration of angels.” *Mor. Nev.* ii. 6. See also, *Phil. Jud. de Mund. Opif.* p. 12. Edit. Col.

There is still another point not to be fairly got over—Trinitarians do indeed jump over it, at a very great expence to their understandings; but I have never yet seen any thing like an answer to it; and that is, that if the word *Aleim*, means a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, then *Aleim* could not speak to other persons in the Deity, because *Aleim* comprehended the whole.—You will say, “there is no impropriety in it, for here the Father is represented as speaking to the Son and Holy Ghost”—But this, Sir, instead of answering the objection, is a mere repetition of the objection itself. For if the word *Aleim* here—where he says, “Let *us* make, &c.” means the Father, it means one person only, and not a plurality of persons; and thus you will yourself prove that the word אֱלֹהִים is properly applicable to a single person, in the very first chapter of Genesis: and if it be there used of a single person, it would be a strong presumptive argument, that it should always be so applied, where there is not an absolute necessity from the context, that it should be otherwise understood.

XIII. “There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one:” 1 John v. 7.

I think you should have told your readers, that it is not one of the clearest things in the world, that this text is genuine.—I have no doubt but that it is spurious; and this is not my opinion only, but the
opinion

opinion of many others, and not of a few who are Trinitarians.—I shall therefore in part answer you in the words of a Trinitarian—I mean of *Michaelis*, in his most excellent Introductory Lectures, to the sacred book of the New Testament.—Speaking of this text, he says, p. 387. “I profess before God, and upon the word of an honest man, that I believe Christ to be true and eternal God, and the JEHOVAH; but I am unwilling to risque so important a truth upon an interpolated text; which was either first introduced into the New Testament through a pious fraud of the Orthodox, or being written in the margin by way of mystical exposition, was from thence transferred into the text by ignorant copyists.”

This same author (*Michaelis*) gives several reasons against the validity of this passage, which I shall here enumerate.

1.) “It is not to be met with in a single Greek manuscript written before the 16th century.”

2.) “It was not inserted in the printed copies of the New Testament from any Greek manuscript; but the Complutensians translated it from the Latin into Greek, and from their edition it was afterward admitted into the other editions of the New Testament.”

3.) “It seems not in any ancient version, except the Latin. It is not to be found in the Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopic, and Russian versions, and was interpolated in one of them in the 14th, in another in the 17th century; and in the rest it is totally omitted.”

4.) “It is not extant in all the manuscripts of the Latin version. In those which have it the

“Three,

“ *Three*, &c. are placed sometimes before, sometimes
 “ after the *three* on earth. And in many manu-
 “ scripts of the Latin version, it is not to be found
 “ in the text, but only in the margin.” And,

5.) “ The ancient fathers do not quote this text,
 “ on occasions when they might be most expected
 “ to quote it.”

P. 383. he observes against the validity of the text,
 that “ it would be an artful and sophistical way of
 “ doubling the number of witnesses, to produce one
 “ witness twice, (that is, the Spirit) in order to make
 “ up two sets of three witnesses each.”

And p. 387. lest the 8th verse beginning with *καὶ*
 should influence the mind in favour of the text, he
 says, “ For the information of those who plead that
 “ the 8th verse begins with *καὶ*, I must barely men-
 “ tion, that this is false ; and that in the Greek manu-
 “ scripts the text stands thus, *οὗτοι τρεις* &c.”

As it seems to be of very considerable importance
 in this debate, that the 8th verse did in ancient times
 receive a mystical exposition, from whence the pre-
 sent verse was probably fabricated ; permit me to add
 a few observations to what has been already quoted.

St. *Austin*, in his book *contra Maximinum*, reasons
 thus : “ I would not have you be deceived by the
 “ Epistle of St. John, where he says, There are three
 “ witnesses, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood :
 “ and the three are one. For these are mysterious
 “ words, in which we are always to mind, not what
 “ they usually import, but what they stand for ; for
 “ they are symbols of things, and different in signi-
 “ fication from their nature. If then those things,
 “ which are signified by these words, are rightly
 “ comprehended, these will be found to be of one

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“ sub-

“ substance.—Of which (namely, the Father, Son,
 “ and Holy Ghost) it may be truly said, They are
 “ three witnesses, and the three are one: so that by
 “ the Spirit, we should understand God the Father;—
 “ also by the word Blood, the Son;—and by the
 “ Water, the Holy Ghost.”—*Augustin. contra Maximin.*
 lib. iii. c. 22.

Facundus, an African Bishop, in his defence of the council of Chalcedon, addressed to the Emperor Justinian, writes thus: “ For St. John the apostle, in
 “ his Epistle, says thus of the Father, and Son, and
 “ Holy Ghost: There are three that bear witness in
 “ earth, the Spirit, Water, and Blood, and these
 “ three are one: by the Spirit denoting the Father;
 “ by the Water, signifying the Holy Ghost; and by
 “ the Blood, signifying the Son.”—*Facund. cap. i.*
 p. 16.

Eucherius, in his *question. Difficil. in Loca v. et Nov. Testament.* speaking of the words *Water, Blood, and Spirit*, writes thus: “ If it be asked what these words
 “ signify, I answer, that many interpret them of the
 “ Trinity. By the Water they understand the Father,
 “ the Son by the Blood, and the Holy Ghost by the
 “ Spirit.”

In one of the manuscripts in the King of France's library, marked 2247, about 500 years old, opposite the former part of the 8th verse there is this exposition, “ τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἁγίῳ καὶ ὁ πατήρ καὶ αὐτὸς αὐτοῦ” that is, “ the Holy Ghost and the Father, and he of himself.”—And opposite to the last part of the verse, this note is added, “ τῷ πνεύματι μία θεότης εἰς θεός” that is, “ one Deity, one God.”—*Simon's Crit. Hist. of the New Testament. Part II. ch. i. p. 2.*

And

And it appears from the words of Father *Simon*, that in the margin of one of *Monf. Colbert's* manuscripts, No. 871, besides these words ὁ Θεὸς μίᾱ Θεότητι, "one God, one Godhead," the Scholiast has also added "μαρτυρία τῷ Θεῷ τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι," "The testimony of God the Father, and of the Holy Ghost." *Ibid.*

Upon the former of these manuscripts, Father *Simon* (who, by the bye, was also a Trinitarian) observes, that "by this we may perceive that the author of that remark understood, The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, to be signified by the three witnesses mentioned by St. John, The Spirit, the Water, and the Blood: and what was formerly written by way of note, passed afterwards into the text, as it often falls out." *Ibid.*

Having thus shewn, that, in ancient times, that which is now the 8th verse was supposed to teach, in a mystical way, the doctrine of the Trinity—which exposition would not have existed, had the present 7th verse then had a being; there remains nothing but to answer two objections, which you will no doubt have ready; namely, that *Tertullian* and *Cyprian*, two fathers who lived in the second and third centuries, quoted this passage. This is frequently said, but it never yet has been proved.

The passage in *Tertullian* runs thus: "The connexion of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, makes three coherent ones, from one another, which three are one (one thing, not one person) as it is said, I and the Father are one, denoting the unity of substance, not the singularity of number." And it is very clear from this passage, that *Tertullian* knew nothing of the text in question, in

that he does not here quote it, where it would have been so full and effectual to his purpose; but actually refers us, for the proof of his point, to another passage, *As it is said*, “I and the Father are one,” John x. 30.

And it is plain that we must understand *Tertullian’s* words, “the Father, the Paraclete, and the Son, which three are one,” as his own, and not as a quotation from the Scriptures; in that he introduces them in the regular course of his reasoning, and then refers you for a proof, with a *quomodo dictum est*, to the passage before mentioned, John x. 30. And to this it may be added, that the words he introduces are NOT THE WORDS OF THE TEXT, as it at present stands; seeing that the text speaks of *Father, Word, and Holy Ghost*, and *Tertullian* of the *Father, the Paraclete, and the Son*: a variation which effectually overthrows the supposed evidence of this ancient father.

And if it should be insisted, that the words “And these three are one,” in *Tertullian*, are a quotation, we may then add, that as the present 8th verse, in the dawn of Trinitarianism, and indeed in later ages, received a mystical exposition, and was supposed to intend something concerning the Father, Son, and Spirit; it will more naturally follow, that it was a quotation of the last clause of that verse which we know had an existence, than that it was a quotation of the 7th verse, the existence of which the highest antiquity disclaims.

Cyprian, in his discourse of the *Unity of the Church*, p. 109. uses these words—“Our Lord says (John x. 30.) *I and the Father are one*: and again it is written concerning the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, *And these three are one* (one thing). And can any one believe that this Unity, which proceeds from the divine immutability, and is consolidated by heavenly

venly mysteries, can be cut asunder in the Church, and divided into parts by the separation of contradictory wills?" Again, this same author says, "If a person can be baptized by them, he can obtain pardon of his sins; and if he can obtain pardon of his sins, he is both sanctified and made a Temple of God. I ask, of what God? If of the Creator, he could not be made his temple, who believes not in him: if of Christ, neither can he be made his, who denies Christ to be God: if of the Holy Ghost, since the three are one, how can the Holy Ghost be reconciled to him, who is an enemy to either the Father or the Son?"—*Cyprian. epist. ad Jubaianum, p. 203. Edit. Pearson.*

It may here be proper to observe, that in the words first above quoted from *Cyprian*, his object was not to prove a plurality of persons in the Deity, but rather to prove the Unity of the Church.—He is writing upon the Unity of the Church, proving that the Church is one, and, instancing other Unities, he argues from the one to the other.—— So in another place he says, "What person therefore can be so impious, so perfidious, so raging mad with discord, as to imagine he can compass, or dare to attempt, the rending the Unity of the Godhead, the Garment of the Lord, or the Church of Christ?" Again—"There is one God, and one Christ, his Church one, his Faith one, and his People by concord are firmly cemented together into one body." Now, as he is not writing to prove the Trinity, his words are of less general importance to the great object of the controversy: And it is pretty plain that he had not the disputed text in view, at the time he wrote; inasmuch as he does not quote the words
of

of it, but other words: for where the term *Word* is used in the text, as we have it, he has got the word *Son*; and this is certainly a fair argument to prove, that it is neither a quotation of, nor a reference to the passage in question; but that it is rather a mystical interpretation of the verse preceding it.— And that this was really the case, is not an opinion of to-day; it is not a new opinion, fabricated to serve the cause I espouse; it is as old as *Facundus*, who was of the same African church with *Cyprian*, and flourished above twelve hundred years ago: He, without any object of this sort in view, after having given a *mystical* interpretation of the 8th verse, as before quoted, tells us, that he understood *Cyprian* to be of the same opinion.

“ Unum esse dicuntur, possunt Spiritus, aut Aquæ, aut Sanguines dici? Quod tamen Johannis apostoli testimonium B. CYPRIANUS Carthaginienfis Antistes et Martyr, in epistola, sive libro, quem de Trinitate (immo de Unitate ecclesiæ) Scripsit, de Patræ, Filio et Spiritu Sancto dictum intelligit. Ait enim dicit Dominus, Ego et Pater Unum sumus; et iterum de Patre, Filio, et Spiritu Sancto scriptum est; et hi Tres Unum sunt.” *Facundus, cap. i. p. 16.*

These observations attended to, I submit it to your candid consideration, whether any one who is really a **LOVER OF THE TRUTH**, can, without incurring the imputation of the grossest obstinacy, bring forward this highly disputable passage, in proof of that doctrine, of which it has long been *esteemed* the chief corner stone; but which does, *in fact*, derive no support from it.

I am,

SIR,

Your very sincere friend,

G. C.

 LETTER IV.

DEAR SIR,

UPON reviewing the subject-matter of my last Letter—I cannot but admire how powerful that *influence* must be, which can lead men to reject the plain, consistent, and rational doctrines of the GOSPEL, and to prefer to them the unintelligible jargon of SCHOOL DIVINITY.—Permit me to hope that you will dispossess yourself of that bias which so powerfully inclines men, at the expence of their understandings, to be enamoured of pre-conceived opinions; while I (actuated by the purest principles of the best of friendships) endeavour to follow you through the remaining part of your publication.

I. The next passage you proceed upon to prove a Trinity in Unity, is, 1 Col. ii. 2.—“To the acknowledgment of God, and the Father, and of Christ.”—Your marginal note says, “Here the Holy Ghost is expressly called God.”—This you have said, without having duly weighed and considered the construction of the passage. However, your finding it necessary to draw such a passage as this into the dispute, is a palpable proof how exceedingly scanty passages are, in which there is any thing of the *naked appearance* of a Trinity.—How came the third verse of the first chapter of this Epistle to avoid a similar fate? It is just such another proof as this is—and both of them are obviated

obviated without much trouble. Do but translate the Greek *καί*, *even*, instead of *and*, (as our old translators have done) and the dispute on this text is at an end.—The old translation shall answer this redoubted argument, *chap. i. ver. 3.* “We give thanks to God, *even* the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” *Chap. ii. ver. 2.* “To know the myserie of God, *even* the Father, and of Christ.”—I hope nothing further need be said to shew the manifest absurdity there is in producing this passage as a proof of the Trinity.—Let us, however, before we quit it, make a little use of it *against* the Trinitarian hypothesis.—And that it gives it a severe and deadly wound, is clear to demonstration; in that the apostle points out, most emphatically, one *person*, who is exclusively God; and shews that this one *person*, (this one living, true, and Supreme God) is the FATHER, in expreis contradistinction to Jesus Christ.

DoCTOR HAMMOND translates Col. i. 3. *the God and Father*; which is still more emphatical. See 2 Cor. i. 3:

II. 2 Cor. *ver. ult.* “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all:”—*that is*, It is my earnest hope and wish, that you may enjoy the kindness of our LORD JESUS CHRIST—that the love of that Being, who is truly and emphatically GOD, may remain with you for ever—and that you may continue to have the communications of his holy Spirit.—This seems to me to be the true meaning of the passage—and there is nothing in it which affects the present dispute, unless it be used to *prove*, that the doctrine in question *is not true*; and that one PERSON *only* is the very and eternal God: for this, I think, follows very clearly, from the absolute and unqualified

qualified term GOD, as it is used in this place, in contradistinction to *Jesus Christ* and the *Holy Ghost*.

If it be said, that *Jesus Christ* and the *Holy Ghost* being joined with God, is a proof that they are God; this is so much an assertion unsupported by the passage, but rather contradicted by it, that it deserves only an answer of the same kind; viz. "That the text proves, by the way in which *Jesus Christ* and the *Holy Ghost* are joined to the Supreme Deity in this benediction, that neither *Jesus Christ* or the *Holy Ghost* is God."—But naked declarations, such as these, tend only to introduce into the minds of men, a faith without any foundation for it, an implicit faith: but if reasons are added to such declarations, and those reasons are honest and obvious, it then becomes our duty to give them credit; however they may oppose our prejudices in favour of pre-conceived opinions. And this brings me to repeat the reason why I conceive that this passage speaks of one *person* only, who is the true and eternal GOD: and that reason is, that the term GOD is not used either of the Son or of the *Holy Ghost*; but of one *person* only, who is not even distinguished as the Father, but is represented simply, emphatically, and absolutely as GOD, in contradistinction to the other two.

You will perhaps contend, that this passage contains a plain proof of the personality of the *Holy Ghost*, because the communion of the *Holy Ghost* is spoken of: but this I deny, unless you will admit that the *blood* of *Christ* is a person: See 1 Cor. x. 16.—And that the *mystery of the calling of the Gentiles* is a person, Eph. iii. 9.—And that the *gospel* is a person, Phil. i. 5.—And that the *sufferings* of *Christ* are a person, Phil. iii. 10.—And, lastly, that the *faith* of

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Christians

Christians is a person, Philem. 6.—For in all these places, the word *κωνονια* is used in the same sense as in the passage before us.

III. Isa. vi. 3. and Rev. iv. 8. are both of a complexion, and are brought to prove, that in the three-fold use of the term HOLY, must be implied a three-fold personality in the ever-blessed Godhead.—This is a sort of argument which, I do assure you, I do not find it very easy to answer. It can only be said, that there is no reason whatever inducing us to believe that it means any such thing.—I should think, however, that the 11th verse of Rev. iv. would have answered just as good a purpose; for there the three distinct terms, *glory*, and *honour*, and *power*, are ascribed to the Deity—And if the use of the terms *holy, holy, holy*, prove a Trinity of persons; what reason is there why *glory, honour, power*, should not prove the same?—But probably, you do not bring them as proofs of the Trinity; but merely as passages which *may possibly* contain dark intimations of it.—Should this be your opinion, how is it that a *revelation* which came from God, should be so dark and obscure, upon a subject which you represent as the very foundation of that religion it intends to teach?

IV. Matth. xxviii. 19. is the last passage I shall now consider—"Go ye into all the world, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."—There do not occur to me any more than three places where the phrase *εις τὸ ὄνομα*, is used in relation to baptism, excepting this before us; which are, Acts viii. 16. xix. 5. and 1 Cor. i. 13. 15. And whether we render them *in* or *into*, does not seem to be of very material consequence; inasmuch as it is plain,
that

that by being baptized *in the name* of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, means nothing more than initiating them into the doctrines of Christianity. It is generally supposed that these words were commanded to be used in the form of baptism. This, however, does not appear to have been the case; because, whenever baptism is afterwards spoken of, it is represented as done *in the name* of "Jesus Christ."—It rather appears, that the principal direction here was, that they should be *taught* the *glorious Gospel* of God, which had its origin in the wisdom and love of the Father; and which the Supreme Father effected by the appearance of his Son, Jesus Christ; and which was made effectual to the recovery of mankind by the Holy Spirit, or the power and influence of God.—I say, it appears to me, that the chief direction here was, that they were not only to be *baptized*, but rather to be *taught* or *discipled*, in the name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*: and this seems to be a very fair construction of the words—"Go ye, therefore, and *disciple* all nations (baptizing them) in the name, &c."—And I am confirmed in this construction, when I compare these words with those used by the other evangelists, when speaking of the same things: Thus, Mark xvi. 15.—"Go ye into all the world, and *preach the GOSPEL* to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized," &c. So also, Luke xxiv. 46, 47.—"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that *repentance*, and *remission of sins*, should be *preached in his name* among all nations."

Besides, if the Holy Spirit must of necessity be a person, and a Divine person, because it is ranked with *persons*; how will you reconcile to this idea, the use

of the word *Spirit*, 1 John v. 8. ? The Spirit, the Water, and the Blood, are there said to bear witness. — Now, if the SPIRIT is, as Trinitarians say, a *person*; then the Water and Blood, which are ranked with it, must be *persons*: But this will be carrying the point too far.—And it is rather unfortunate for the cause of the personality of the Holy Spirit, as argued from personal acts being attributed to it, that this very passage, 1 John v. 8. proves, that personal acts may be ascribed to things which are not persons: for here, the personal act of *bearing witness*, is attributed to *Water*, and to *Blood*.

And indeed, in this very passage which we are considering, it is well worth the attention of those who have nothing but the knowledge of the TRUTH in view, that the terms *Father* and *Son* are of the masculine gender—and the words *Holy Ghost* are of the neuter; which indicates, that the *Holy Spirit* of God, as it signifies the influence, energy, or power of God, is intended.

V. After you have laboured, to the length of thirty pages, to prove the doctrine of the Trinity, I confess I leave off unconvinced by any thing you have advanced; because I see nothing in your Scripture quotations that teach any such doctrine. — On the other hand, the passages you have adduced, when examined by the plainest rules of common sense, evidently bear another and an opposite meaning.—You have, however, in your thirtieth page, brought into play a passage, which, I confess, baffles every endeavour I can make to pervert its meaning, and soars above all opposition, with this doctrine painted in very conspicuous characters on its breast. The passage is, that *beautiful and sublime one*, which you quote from what you call the

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the *Catholic Formulary*! “O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners.”—I say, it has been my endeavour to make sense of these words upon Unitarian principles, in order that I might be convinced whether there is any disparity between the words of the Sacred Scriptures, which are forced into the unnatural service of Trinitarianism, and words quoted from the *Formulary* of the Church of England, which were written for the express purpose of teaching the Trinity. And indeed, I have found so much difference in them, that you are, in some degree, justified in distinguishing these words by the very handsome compliment of *beautiful* and *sublime*!—Believe me, my friend, I cannot see the difference, without feeling myself very sensibly affected by it; as it discovers to me so much of the blindness of the human mind, even in this *meridian* of LIGHT and KNOWLEDGE. It is too perfect an emblem of that gross ignorance, which, in uncivilized communities, leads to the worshipping of STOCKS and STONES: and reduces facts of that nature to the standard of our comprehension and belief, which would otherwise be branded with all the marks of improbability.

I have tried the same experiment with many other passages in the *Formulary* of the Church of England, and have been disappointed in them all. And it has appeared to me not a little extraordinary, that the language of Scripture should be so lax and insignificant, as it certainly is, if the Trinity is a Divine truth taught there; and that the language of your admired *Formulary* should be so explicit and significant.—Among the great variety of unscriptural expressions used there, I have selected the following:—“Glory
be

be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."—If the doctrine of the Trinity is a truth, how much more INTELLIGIBLE were the compilers of the Formulary, than the Evangelical-writers!—"There is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost: But the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all One."—I defy any man living to pervert this passage so as to find the appearance of sense in it, upon any other scheme than the Trinitarian.

It would be an undefirable task to follow this creed of St. *Athanasius* all through, as we should find it little more than an assemblage of expressions wholly repugnant to the Scriptures, and subversive of the gospel taught there.—Again, "O God the Son, Redeemer of the world—O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and Son—have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." Were these the words of Scripture, I should not hesitate to decide in favour of the Supreme Deity of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: but I find no language so unequivocally teaching those points in the Sacred Writings.—As the word *proceeding* is used here, excuse me if I digress one moment, by referring you, first, to John xv. 26. which is the chief passage upon which the *eternal procession* of the Holy Ghost is built; and to John viii. 42. where an expression equally strong is used of our blessed Lord, as is in the other used of the Holy Ghost, and upon which this doctrine is founded—John xv. 26. "The Comforter, whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth *ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς*, from the Father;" and John viii. 42. "I (says Christ) proceeded forth, and came from God," *ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐγενόμην καὶ ἦκα*. —The Reader will make his own

own comment on the Trinitarian doctrine of Divine PROCESSIONS. — Again, “ God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,” &c.—“ Our Saviour Christ, both God and man.” — “ Who art one God, one Lord : not one only person, but three persons in one substance,” &c. &c. &c.—The language of these passages is so unequivocal, in proof of a Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead, that there does not, there cannot, remain a doubt, but that the doctrine is clearly and fully taught in the **Book of Common-Prayer of the Church of England**. — Whether *that* book, and the mass of articles, catechisms, and creeds, of the various Christian churches, are to be our guides, or the HOLY SCRIPTURES, is the only necessary consideration in this dispute—And I am persuaded, if that consideration were attended with all its true weight, in a conscientious and unprejudiced mind, (where only, indeed, its true weight and influence can be found) it would put a speedy and effectual end to the dispute : And till men rouse themselves from the delirium occasioned by interest and education, they will never be able to see how violently they oppose the plainest dictates of their reason, in pretending to believe this doctrine : and till that delirium is cured, and men can be brought to seek after TRUTH, from a disinterested love of it—it is as ridiculous to reason with them, as it would be to reason with the wretched inhabitant of *Moorfields*, who could give no other reason for his being a king, than—that ‘ he was sure he was one.’ — My dear friend, my having thus far *reasoned* with you, is a positive proof that I do not consider you to be one of that number.

VI. You

VI. You say, *page 31.* that “ the apostle Paul calls the Trinity a *Mystery*.”—This I do not believe; nor can I credit your assertion, till you shew me where he says so.—But I expect, for the sake of Truth, that you will either shew the world where such a declaration is to be found, or that you will tell the world how much you are mistaken.

VII. Your observations upon Dr. DISNEY’s *instability*, are not altogether liberal, nor are they just; unless you can shew, that the mind of man is in so mature a state, as that he can, at one leap, go from the narrow path of Error, into the broad way of perfect Truth.—“ Prove all things, (says Paul) hold fast that which is good.”—A better direction cannot be given; nor can there be a greater proof of the honesty of a man’s inquiries, than arises from the adventurous task of complying with this apostolic admonition.—He who does so, may indeed suffer the insignificant sneer of the man who is content to pin his faith on *General Councils, Formularies, and Creeds*; but he enjoys the substantial good which arises from the approbation of his own conscience, and from a conviction, that however he may in the ardent pursuit of Truth, happen to be mistaken, He who is not only the God, but the loving Father of mankind, will approve and reward his endeavours.

Not altogether like this fatherly kindness, is your severe judgment, *page 32.* where you, in my opinion, too confidently charge the tenets espoused by Dr. DISNEY, “ upon the authority of God’s word, as *Guilty Heresy*.”—Remember, my dear friend, the apostle’s words—“ Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own Master he standeth or falleth.—There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save
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and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?"—If his reasons for leaving the Church were sufficient in his view of things, he will, no doubt, be justified at the bar of infinite wisdom and goodness.—And it would be a little incongruous to say, that his error is a *guilty one*, because his reasons were not strong enough to convince you.—Few men are mature enough to sit in judgment on the trial of truth.—Nor is it the province of any man, no, not of the first Archbishop in the universe, nor of the Pope himself, to *condemn* men for their opinions.—Reason with them, if you please ; but beware how you invade the prerogatives of that Being, whose alone it is to judge of a man's actions, and to whom alone vengeance belongs.

In p. 33. and 34. your attacks upon the Doctor's probity and sincerity, your reflections upon his motives, your skits upon his academic honours, and your wit upon his scientific distinctions, are a little too ludicrous. How they can have escaped from one so distinguished for contrary manners as the author is, is to me a matter of astonishment !

In your observations upon the Church's right to render the XXXIX Articles *subscriptory*, and in calling that Church the *sanctum sanctorum*, you have certainly gone farther than you could seriously intend ; but you have done this more particularly in your next observation, where you say, " Indeed, I think the Church would act very justifiably in proceeding a step further [that is, I suppose, a step further than to require subscriptions] or in short, so far as to enforce some general rules, for the direction of Sermons and Lectures."—I am really concerned, that in a Protestant country, one professing the Protestant

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religion,

religion, can use language so inconsistent with that excellent spirit of religious liberty, which beat down the strong walls of popery, and blessed these countries with the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ ! A most respectable, and excellent Protestant writer of the Church of England, shall make a few observations to you upon this intolerant and subscriptionary spirit.

The excellent Mr. CHILLINGWORTH, when defending the Protestants against the severity of the Papists, says: " If you think me one of those, to whom St. John forbids you to say, *God save you*, then you are to think, and prove me one of those deceivers which deny *Christ Jesus to be come in the flesh*. If you think me an heretick, and therefore to be avoided, you must prove me to be *ἀποστατικός*, condemned by my own judgment ; which I know I am not, and therefore think you cannot. If you say, I do not *hear the Church*, and therefore am to be esteemed an heathen, or publican ; you are to prove then, that by the *Church* is meant the *Church of [England] Rome* ; and yet, when you have done so, I hope *Christians* are not forbidden to shew *humanity and civility* even to *Pagans* : " *Religion of Protestants a Safe Way to Salvation*, p. 449.

Again ; " If you can convince me of *wilful opposition* against the known truth ; of *negligence* in seeking it, of *unwillingness* to find it, of preferring temporal respects before it, or of any other fault which is in my power to amend ; that is indeed a fault, if I mend it not ; be as angry with me as you please : But to impute to me *involuntary errors*, or that I do not see that which I would see, but cannot ; or that I will not profess that which I do not believe ; certainly this is a far more *unreasonable error*, than any you can justly charge me with : " *Ibid.*

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“The differences between Protestants concerning errors damnable and not damnable, truths fundamental and not fundamental, may be easily reconciled. For either the error they speak of may be *purely and simply involuntary*, or it may be, in respect of the *cause of it, involuntary*. If the cause of it be some voluntary and avoidable fault, the error is itself sinful, and consequently, in its own nature, damnable : as, if by negligence in seeking the truth, by unwillingness to find it, by pride, by obstinacy, by desiring that religion should be true which suits best with my ends, by fear of men’s ill-opinion, or any other worldly fear, or any other worldly hope, I betray myself to any error, contrary to any divine revealed truth ; that error may be justly stiled a sin, and, consequently, of itself, to such a one, damnable. But if I be guilty of none of these faults, but be desirous to know the truth, and diligent in seeking it ; and advise not at all with flesh and blood about the choice of my opinions, but only with God, and that reason that he hath given me : If I be thus qualified, and yet through human infirmity fall into error, that error cannot be damnable :”
Id. p. 121.

Again ; “When you can shew, that in this and all other controversies, God hath interposed his testimony on one side or other ; so that either they do see it, and will not ; or were it not for their own voluntary and avoidable fault, might and should see it, and do not ; let all such errors be as damnable as you please to make them. In the mean while, if they suffer themselves neither to be betrayed into their errors, nor kept in them by any sin of their will ; if they do their best endeavour to free themselves from all errors, and yet fail of it through human frailty : so

well am I persuaded of the goodness of God, that if in me alone should meet a confluence of all such errors, of all the Protestants in the world, that were thus qualified; I should not be so much afraid of them all, as I should be to ask pardon for them. For, whereas, that which you affright us with, of calling God's veracity in question, is but a panick fear, a fault that no man, thus qualified, is or can be guilty of. To ask pardon of simple and purely involuntary errors, is tacitly to imply that God is angry with us for them; and that were to impute to him the strange tyranny of requiring brick, when he gives no straw; of expecting to gather, where he sowed not; to reap, where he sowed not; of being offended with us, for not doing what he knows we cannot do. This I say upon a supposition that they do their best endeavours to know God's will and do it; which he that denies to be possible, knows not what he says: for he says in effect, That men cannot do, what they can do; for to do what a man can do, is to do his best endeavour. But because this supposition, though certainly possible, is very rare and admirable, I say, secondly, that I am verily persuaded, that God will not impute errors to them as sins, who use such a measure of industry in finding truth, as human prudence and ordinary discretion, (their abilities and opportunities, their distractions and hinderances, and all other things considered) shall advise them unto, in a matter of such consequence. But if herein also we fail, then our errors begin to be malignant, and justly imputable as offences against God, and that love of his truth which he requires in us:" *Ibid.*

Again; "The presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men
upon

upon the general words of God, and laying them upon men's consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit that we can speak of the things of God, better than in the words of God: This deifying our own interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others; this restraining of the word of God, from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty, wherein Christ and the apostles left them, is, and hath been, the only fountain of all the schisms of the church, and that which makes them immortal: The common incendiary of Christendom, and that which tears into pieces, not the coat, but the bowels and members of Christ: *Ridente Turcâ nec dolente Judæo*. Take away these walls of separation, and all will quickly be one. Take away this persecuting, burning, cursing, damning, of men, for not subscribing to the words of men, as the words of God; require of Christians only to believe Christ, and to call no man master, but him only: Let those leave claiming infallibility, that have no title to it, and let them that in their words disclaim it, disclaim it likewise in their actions. In a word, take away tyranny, which is the devil's instrument to support errors, and superstitions, and impieties, in the several parts of the world, which could not otherwise long withstand the power of truth: I say, take away tyranny, and restore Christians to their just and full liberty of captivating their understanding to Scripture only; and as rivers, when they have a free passage, run all to the ocean, so it may well be hoped, by God's blessing, that universal liberty, thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to truth and unity. These thoughts of peace
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(I am persuaded) may come from the God of peace, and to his blessing I commend them :” *Id.* 152.

Again; “If men would be themselves, and be content that others should be, in the choice of their religion, the servants of God, and not of men--if they would allow that the way to heaven is no narrower now than Christ left it, his yoke no heavier than he made it—that the belief of no more difficulties is required now to salvation, than was in the primitive church—that no error is in itself destructive, and exclusive from salvation now, which was not then—if, instead of being zealous Papists, earnest Calvinists, rigid Lutherans, they would become themselves, and be content that others should be, plain and honest Christians—if all men would believe the Scripture, and, freeing themselves from prejudice and passion, would sincerely endeavour to find the true sense of it, and live according to it, and require no more of others but to do so—nor denying their communion to any that do so, would so order their public service of God, that all which do so may, without scruple, or hypocrisy or protestation against any part of it, join with them in it—Who doth not see that seeing (as we suppose here, and shall prove hereafter) all necessary truths are plainly and evidently set down in Scripture—there would, of necessity, be among all men, in all things necessary, unity of opinion :” *Id.* p. 138.

Again; “I have learned from the ancient fathers of the Church, that nothing is more against religion than to force religion—and of St. Paul, The weapons of the Christian warfare are not carnal. And great reason: For human violence may make men counterfeit, but cannot make them believe; and is therefore fit for nothing but to breed Form without, and
Atheism

Atheism within. They that know there is a King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, by whose will and pleasure kings and kingdoms stand and fall, they know, that to no king, or state, any thing can be profitable which is unjust—and that nothing can be more evidently unjust, than to force weak men, by the profession of a religion which they believe not, to lose their own eternal happiness, out of a vain and needless fear, lest they may possibly disturb their temporal quietness :” *Id.* p. 228, 229.

Again; “ It seems then, that they that hold errors, must hold them fast, and take special care of being convicted in conscience that they are in error, for fear of being schismatics ! Protestants must continue Protestants, and Puritans Puritans, and Papists Papists ; nay, Jews, and Turks, and Pagans, must remain Jews, and Turks, and Pagans, and go on constantly to the devil ; or else, forsooth, they must be schismatics ! and that from themselves.—I know a man that of a moderate Protestant turned a Papist ; and, the day that he did so, (as all things that are done, are perfected some day or other) was convicted, in conscience, that his yesterday’s opinion was an error, and yet thinks he was no schismatic for doing so ; and desires to be informed by you, whether or no he was mistaken ? The same man afterwards, upon better consideration, became a doubting Papist, and of a doubting Papist a confirmed Protestant. And yet this man thinks himself no more to blame for all these changes, than a traveller, who using all diligence to find the right way to some remote city, where he had never been, (as the party I speak of had never been in heaven) did yet mistake it, and after find his error, and amend it. Nay, he stands upon his justification
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so far as to maintain, that his alterations, not only to you, but also from you, by God's mercy, were the most satisfactory actions to himself that ever he did, and the greatest victories that ever he obtained over himself, and his affections to those things which in this world are most precious; as wherein, for God's sake, and (as he was verily persuaded) out of love to the TRUTH, he went upon a certain expectation of these inconveniencies, which, to ingenuous natures, are of all most terrible. So that, though there were much weakness in some of these alterations, yet, certainly, there was no wickedness. Neither does he yield his weakness altogether without apology, seeing his deductions were rational, and out of some principles commonly received by Protestants, as well as Papists, and which, by his education, had got possession of his understanding:" *Id. p. 233.*

Again; " They which are unwilling to believe nonsense themselves, or persuade others to do so, it is but reason they should make the faith wherewith they believe, an intelligible, compossible, consistent thing, and not define it by repugnancies. Now, nothing is more repugnant, than that a man should be required to give most certain credit unto that which cannot be made appear most certainly credible: and if it appear to him to be so, then is it not obscure that it is so. For if you speak of an acquired, rational, discursive faith; certainly, these reasons which make the object seem credible, must be the cause of it; and, consequently, the strength and firmity of my assent, must rise and fall together with the apparent credibility of the object. If you speak of a supernatural, infused faith, then, you either suppose it infused by the former means; and then that which was said before must be
said

said again : for whatsoever effect is wrought merely by means, must bear proportion to, and cannot exceed the virtue of the means, by which it is wrought : As nothing by water, can be made more cold than water—nor by fire, more hot than fire—nor by honey, more sweet than honey—nor by gall, more bitter than gall.—Or, if you will suppose it infused without means, then that power which infuseth into the understanding assent, (which bears analogy to sight in the eye) must also infuse evidence, that is, visibility, into the object : and look, what degree of assent is infused into the understanding, at least the same degree of evidence must be infused into the object. And for you to require a strength of credit beyond the appearance of the object's credibility, is all one as if you should require me to go ten miles an hour upon a horse that will go but five—to discern a man through a mist or cloud, that makes him not certainly discernable—to hear a sound more clearly than it is audible—to understand a thing more fully than it is intelligible. And he that doth so, I may well expect that his next injunction will be, that I must see something that is invisible—hear something inaudible—understand something that is wholly unintelligible :” *Id.* p. 253, 254.

What you have said about Subscriptions, is again well answered, *page* 41.—“ If men did really and sincerely submit their judgments to Scripture, and that only, and would require no more of any man but to do so, it were impossible but that all controversies touching things necessary, and very profitable, should be ended.” And again, *page* 46.—“ All the power in the world is neither fit to convince, nor able to compel, a man's conscience to consent to any thing. Worldly terror may prevail so far as to make men profess a reli-

gion which they believe not, (such men, I mean; who know not that there is a heaven provided for martyrs, and a hell for those that dissemble such truths as are necessary to be professed :) But to force either any man to believe what he believes not, or any honest man to dissemble what he does believe, (if God commands him to profess it) or to profess what he does not believe; all the powers in the world are too weak, with all the powers of hell to assist them."

Again, *page 70.*—"The Scripture is a sufficient rule for those to judge by, that believe it to be the Word of God, what they are to believe, and what they are not to believe. I say, sufficiently perfect, and sufficiently intelligible, in things necessary, to all that have understanding, whether they be learned or unlearned. And my reason hereof is convincing and demonstrative—because nothing is necessary to be believed, but what is plainly revealed. For to say, that when a place of Scripture, by reason of ambiguous terms, lies indifferent between divers senses, whereof one is true, and the other is false—that God obliges men, under pain of damnation, not to mistake through error and human frailty—is to make God a tyrant; and to say, that he requires us certainly to attain that end, for the attaining whereof we have no certain means: which is to say, that, like Pharaoh, he gives no straw, and requires brick—that he reaps where he sows not—that he will not be pleased with our utmost endeavours to please him, without full and exact, and never-failing performance—that his will is, we should do what he knows we cannot do; that he will not accept of us according to that we have, but requireth of us what we have not. Which, whether it can consist with his goodness, with his wisdom,
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and with his word, I leave it to honest men to judge. If I should send a servant to Paris, or Rome, or Jerusalem, and he using his utmost diligence not to mistake his way; yet, notwithstanding, meeting often with such places, where the road is divided into several ways, whereof every one is as likely to be true, and as likely to be false as any other, should at length mistake and go out of the way: Would not any man say, that I were an impotent, foolish, and unjust master, if I should be offended with him for doing so? And shall we not tremble to impute that to GOD, which we would take in foul scorn if it were imputed to ourselves? Certainly, I, for my part, fear I should not love God, if I should think so strangely of him."

Thus much from this wise and learned man, in answer to your zeal against heretics — your fondness of Subscriptions — and your anxiety for general directions for the composition of Sermons and Lectures.

MR. CHILLINGWORTH wrote in the reign of Charles the First, and his book was commended as a notable defence of the Church of England against the Papists, by many of the most learned and respectable dignitaries of the Church in that day*. — If, my friend,

* The following commendations are prefixed to the work :---

"Mandetur Typis hic Liber, cui Titulus, *The Religion of Protestants a safe Way to Salvation*: In quo nihil occurrit à bonis Moribus, à Doctrina et Disciplina in Ecclesia Anglicana assertis, alienum."---RICH. BAILY *Vicecan. Oxon.*

"Perlegi hunc Librum, cui Titulus est, *The Religion of Protestants, &c.* In quo nihil reperio Doctrinæ vel Disciplinæ Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ adversum, sed quamplurima quæ Fidem Orthodoxam egregie illustrent, et adversantia glossemata acute, perspicue, et modeste dissipant."---JO. PRIDEAUX, *S. T. P. Regius. Oxon.*

friend; he is a little too severe upon you, I hope you will have charity enough to forgive him. I am sure you know better than you have written; and you would have written as you *know*, if your *zeal* had not carried you beyond yourself.—Mr. CHILLINGWORTH, no doubt, found it necessary to be a little severe, in order to work a cure.—It was well said by one, that we should never despise people for want of natural parts, but for making a wrong use of good ones—and that if a man *walks* lame, he is to be pitied; but if he *dances* lame, he should be condemned.

VIII. I have now done with your Letter to Dr. DISNEY; and shall wait, with some impatience, the event of your perusal of my reply.—It has been composed in a violent hurry, and contains but the mere outlines of the several arguments I have adduced.—I heartily hope you will give it an attentive and candid perusal.—I do assure you, my intentions have had only one director, and that was an earnest LOVE of the TRUTH.—And, I hope the same affection will incline you to lay aside every consideration, which is collateral to the point in question.—Reduce your enquiry to this single point--Do the Scriptures uniformly and clearly reveal the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Divine essence; or, Do they not?—Among other things, let me entreat you not to suffer yourself to be influenced by ideas that no one but an infinite Being was equal to the work of redemption, as you seem to think, *p. 10. 14.* for this is a point which should rather follow your researches that go before them.—It is presumption and folly, in a very principal degree, to

And three others, signed, SAM. FELL, *Public. Theol. Professor in Univ. Oxon.*—SAM. BAKER---and G. STRADLING, *S. T. P. Rectoris. in Christo Pat. D. GILB. Archiep. Cant. a Sac. Dom.*

say,

say, that no one but an infinite Being could **redeem** us; and from thence to argue, that our Redeemer was an infinite person.—It would be much **more** modest and becoming us, first of all, without **prejudice**, to become satisfied, from the Scriptures that **he** was an infinite person; and from thence to infer, that the Divine Wisdom saw it right that it should be so.

And this brings us back to the old question, which we have already canvassed, Whether Jesus Christ is the Supreme God.—I earnestly entreat you to reconsider this point.—Consider whether it must not be equally offensive to the Deity, that we give supreme honour to Jesus Christ, if he was not the Supreme God; as it would be to deny him that honour, if he really is so. We worship one living and true God, the Creator and Governor of all things; you can do no more. We believe that the Holy Spirit of God is God; you can do no more. We believe that God dwelt, in all his majesty and power, in the man Christ Jesus; what can you do more?—Then why be angry with us? Why not examine, good-naturedly and candidly, the reasons we give for our faith? and if you see that your *Formulary*, of which you so much boast, is inconsistent with the word of God, treat it as Dr. DISNEY has done; and you will have the reward of a serene, unruffled conscience, for the sacrifice of temporal enjoyments — A reward, Christians ought to rejoice in; and which, I am assured, they will rejoice in, who are so not in *Name*, but in *Deed*.

But lest you should lay too much stress upon the necessity there was for an infinite person to redeem us, let us reason together a little on this subject.—I declare, if I was asked the question, Whether it was
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necessary that an infinite person should redeem us? and I had never heard of the popular disputes upon the subject, I should immediately answer, that it would be impossible that an infinite person *could* be our Redeemer—and that for these palpable reasons; *to wit*, *1st*, If it were necessary that the Redeemer should suffer and die, I should argue, that there is but one infinite Being, namely, GOD; and that he is *impassible*, as well as *infinite*; and therefore it would be impossible that he should either *suffer* or *die*. — If I believed that his example only was necessary to lead us into the way of Truth and everlasting Life; I should contend that the infinite God, whose ways are so much above our ways—whose thoughts are so much above our thoughts—and who is not subject to the weaknesses and infirmities of human nature—could not be proposed to rational beings as an exemplar, without an entire subversion of the order of things.

If we say, that sin is an infinite evil, and therefore an infinite satisfaction was required; I should not hesitate to deny both these positions:—the first of them, because a finite being cannot do an infinite act; no, not against an infinite object: for the object against whom an act is done, does not alter the nature of the act—the act is the act of a being circumscribed in all its powers, and therefore every act of that being must be circumscribed in its nature.—If you get rid of this, by averring, that if the act is not infinite, yet that the evil of the act is*; this I deny also, and request that you will define exactly what an infinite evil is:—its effects and consequences must, at any rate, extend throughout the

* See this subject handled more at large, in a pamphlet lately published, by the author of these Letters, intitled --- “*A Vindication of the Honour of God, and of the Rights of Men.*”

infinities of *time* and *space*, to make it so—and, if the speculation is not too nice for you, let me entreat you to give it a thorough investigation, and tell me how and what this is.—As to the second position, that infinite satisfaction was required; I request you to produce me either some plain passages of Holy Writ where it is expressly said so, or that you will give up the point.—Unless, indeed, you are well enough versed in the secrets of the divine government, to teach us this doctrine upon the authority of supernatural information.

You will smile at some of these observations, and think you can give them a complete answer, by saying, that it was not JEHOVAH who suffered and died, but the man Christ Jesus who suffered and died.—And so do I say, and I mean what I say; which is more than a consistent Trinitarian can do:—for it is essential to the Trinitarian hypothesis, that there was but one person in Christ; and that this was not a human *person*, but *one* of the *persons* in JEHOVAH—and thus you are reduced to the necessity of denying that our Lord was truly, properly, and completely, a MAN; seeing he could (as Trinitarians say) have only a human *nature*, and not a human *person*:—and this brings you to one of these points; either that the second person in the Trinity suffered and died, or that a mere abstract essence suffered and died.—Upon the first of these points, I should enquire how it was possible, that he who only hath *immortality* should suffer and die? and upon the second, how a mere *essence*, without a person, could suffer and die? And I should expect a direct and an explicit answer to these questions, without ambiguity, equivocation, or mental reservation.

Before I wholly quit the subject, give me leave to remind you, that there is a passage in the Epistles which you have *omitted*; but which has generally been

been one of the foremost among the proofs for our Lord's supreme divinity—I mean the 5th verse of the 9th chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans—"Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came; who is over all, God blessed for ever." I must confess that this passage has been rather roughly used, in order to reduce it to a conformity with the other parts of Scripture; and I think it has been generally misunderstood by both parties. The Greek words are:—Ὦν ἡ πατὴρ, καὶ ἐξ ἧν ὁ Χριστός, το κατὰ σαρκά. Ὁ ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων Θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, Ἀμήν;— which, rendered literally, stand thus: "Whose the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ; He who is over all God blessed for ever." And what is wanting, I pray you, to make the sense of the passage complete, and the construction just and harmonious?—

In my opinion, it does not require a moment's doubt.—The verb supplied through the verse will render it a beautiful climax, and will clear the passage of all doubt and uncertainty. It will then run thus:—"Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, *is* Christ; he who is over all *is* God, blessed for evermore."—Our translators felt the necessity of some such supplies; and therefore introduced the verb "*are*" in the first instance, and the verb "*came*" in the second—and you will agree with me, that to have done justice to the whole passage, they should have introduced a verb in the third instance, before the word God—and instead of translating ὁ ὢν, *who*, they should have rendered it *he who*, as they have done Matt. xii. 30. "He who is not, &c." and, John vi. 46. "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save ὁ ὢν, *he which* is of God."—And so, John iii. 31. ὁ ὢν, "*He who* is of the earth"—and, Rev. i. 4. 8.

From

From the $\delta \omega \nu$, "*He who is*," &c.—See also the Septuagint version, of Exod. iii. 14. $\epsilon \gamma \omega \epsilon \iota \mu \iota \delta \omega \nu$, "*I am he that is*."—The verb is frequently supplied to the word *God*; see 2 Cor. i. 21. *ch.* v. 5. and Heb. iii. 4.

I have observed three other climaxes, of the same nature: 1 Cor. xi. 3. "*The head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.*" Heb. iii. 3, 4. "*Every house is builded by some man, but he that built all things is God.*"—So, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. "*All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*"—And these passages are rendered the more remarkable, in that therein not only GOD is placed as the Head or Supreme above all, even in express contradistinction to Christ Jesus; as he also is, Rom. ix. 5. with which I am comparing them: but the verbs are omitted in the Greek, and supplied by the translators in the same way in which I have proposed to supply them in that passage.

If you, Sir, possess that love of immortal TRUTH which I think you do, and which I know it deserves, you will treat this matter with very serious consideration. It is a matter of no inconsiderable weight—it is in my opinion, a subject of the most exalted magnitude, that we should know the GOD whom we worship, and from whose bounty all our expectations are.—If you are sincerely satisfied that I am wrong, labour to convince me of it. I only want to know the TRUTH—I do not care what form it wears.—I am at present convinced, that what I contend for will bear the test of severest examination.—Try it, therefore, my friend, by the most rigid forms—it will equally triumph over the acumen of logic, and the poignancy of ridicule:—it stands on the solid basis of Eternal VERACITY.

Let me then conjure you, as a reasonable and an accountable being, that you *examine*, again and again, these doctrines—they are of great consequence in the scale of things—and it becomes us to love and to search after the TRUTH. I earnestly entreat you not to shut your eyes against the light and evidence of rational and intelligible Scripture VERITIES.

The system I have been taught from the Scriptures, gives me such high and honourable notions of the Divine Being, that I have no apprehensions of Divine indignation against me for defending them.—You may, if you please, tie the favour and benevolence of God to the gloomy system of CALVIN, to your own *opinions*—to the elect few who believe as you do—I have no such degrading views of the Divine Majesty: I believe that his favour is more likely to follow an upright heart than an orthodox head: and of these two, I hope I shall, at any rate, be blessed with the former.

As to the success of my intended publication—I shall leave that with Him for the vindication of whose honour I have written it.

The analogy of Scripture, I am sure, is for me.—Where do you find the general tenor of Scripture to be, that there are *three* persons in *one* essence?—I contend that, on the other hand, the Divine Being is constantly, in his person and essence, represented as *one*—and this one living and true God is, throughout the New-Testament, continually spoken of under the character of the FATHER.—Shew me that the Scriptures do uniformly represent the Son as *co-equal*, and *co-essential*, with the Father and the Holy Ghost.—Shew me where the Scriptures represent the Holy
Ghost

Ghost as *co-equal*, and *co-essential*, with the Father and the Son.—And when you have laboured for this in vain, you may readily find, that there is no other representation in Scripture of the Son, than that he is a highly exalted *man*—and that the Holy Ghost is uniformly represented as the *influence, energy, or power* of God.—If you are determined to hold fast the doctrine you have espoused, maugre all opposition, do so. But remember, Sir, that it does not, cannot redound to your honour, or to the credit of the cause you are engaged in, (I mean the Christian cause) to contend for that as DIVINE TRUTH, which the Scriptures are totally ignorant of. For I am not ashamed to declare, that the Trinitarian doctrine is subversive of the true gospel, and derogatory of the honour and majesty of God.

I know the advocates for mystery will contend, that “if the divinity of the blessed Jesus, and the “Holy Ghost, is denied, there is nothing left for “the comfort and support of Christians—nothing “commensurate with their wants and infirmities.” But those who think so, would do well to explain what they mean by this declaration. And if the attempt to explain it does not convince them that they greatly err—I will undertake to shew them, that this declaration is utterly void of foundation, both in Scripture and Reason; and then they will either agree with my sentiments, and renounce their unintelligible Creed, or they will be honest enough to say, that they are content to believe it without evidence.—If this point were fairly argued, it would eventually shew, that zeal on this head is zeal without knowledge; and that however Trinitarians may think they are serving the cause of God

and religion, that they are, in fact, dishonouring them both; and are pursuing that very plan which has hitherto too woefully retarded the progress of Christ's kingdom upon earth—but which, blessed be the holy name of God, is now upon the point of being everlastingly destroyed.—I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet—but this I know, that in proportion as men shake off the trammels of education, they will throw off those notions which represent the Divine Being under the idea of a Platonic Trinity, and in the gloomy view of a capricious tyrant.

These loose hints I hope you will improve upon.—If any warmth, or appearance of asperity, has escaped from me, pardon me, and believe me to be

Your very sincere friend,

G. CLARK.

OBSERVA-

OBSERVATIONS

ON

MR. HAWKINS'S ADDRESS

TO

DOCTOR PRIESTLEY.

HAVING, since I finished the above Letters, met with an Address to Dr. PRIESTLEY, by the Rev. Mr. HAWKINS, I have given it a candid and dispassionate perusal, and confess I am highly pleased with the general spirit of moderation and temperance with which that Address is written. I have no doubt but that the author was directed by the most generous and disinterested motives—the whole tenor of his performance plainly shews it. But it may, I think, with equal truth be affirmed, that he as manifestly discovers an undue predilection for the doctrine he espouses. This difficulty must, however, be solved by the old principle, that “*understandings differ as much as faces do.*”--And indeed, we must not expect that the ideas of several persons, who have gone through different and perhaps contrary courses of religious education, should be altogether similar.—It is very likely, before I get through my observations on this performance, that I shall have need to use this as an apology for myself; as I plainly foresee, that I shall have

have occasion frequently to express my astonishment that Mr. HAWKINS's sentiments, and mode of thinking, differ so widely from my own.

I intend to confine myself to that part of his performance, in which he attempts to explain in what sense he understands the plurality of persons in the Deity, and the Union of the two natures in Christ.

Let us first of all state the opinion Mr. HAWKINS has delivered: It is, "that there is only one God; that there is, and was from all eternity in this one undivided Being, some certain distinction, which has been made known to us under the idea and appellation of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," p. 4.—"that in abstract sense, the title of *God* is more emphatically applied to the Father, than to the other two, when he is considered as the fountain of the Godhead.—The idea of paternity and unorigination, gives the Father a superiority, or rather a priority of order, which yet is by no means incompatible either with the notion of co-existence, or perfect equality," p. 4, 5. "It is only the existence of such a diversity that we understand by the denomination of persons, which we mean to assert in general terms," p. 11. "That in a metaphysical and abstract sense, the Father has a pre-eminence and priority of order, office and causality, though he is in no sense superior either as to excellence or duration," p. 15. "That the word *person* is adopted to express some real, though inconceivable diversities in the Godhead, which have each their peculiar relations, attributes, and properties," p. 19.—"That when it is said, that the Son was
begotten,

begotten, we only use this expression to denote the relation which subsists between a Father and a Son.— When it is affirmed that the Holy Ghost was not begotten, but *proceeds*, we adopt this particular term for no other reason than because in scripture Almighty God is never called *his Father*, but he seems to be a spirit *proceeding* both from the Father and the Son,” p. 15.

“ That Jesus was a real human being, composed of a body and a soul like our’s, whom God was pleased to assume from the first moment of his existence, into so intimate an union with that *relation* of himself, which has been manifested unto us under the name of the *Son*: that as our body and soul constitute but one man, so the divine and human natures of Christ, by reason of his ineffable union, constitute but one person, yet without any mixture or confusion,” p. 14. — “ The Man Christ Jesus was so intimately united with the Godhead, that the words, actions, and attributes of each, are indifferently attributed to either,” p. 16. — “ When it is said that the Son of God was made Man, we cannot be supposed to mean that the Divinity was changed into human flesh, or conformed, or mixed with it; but only that he assumed an human being into a most perfect union with himself. Neither is it asserted that God suffered in a nature which we all acknowledge to be incapable of pain.—Impassible in his own nature, why may he not suffer in another, which is passible and mortal ?” p. 17.

We have now traced the author’s account of the least exceptionable mode of thinking and speaking of the Trinity, and of the person of Jesus Christ: and the first thing that astonishes me in a survey of it is,
that

that he should exclaim against *unnatural, unmeaning, and fallacious language*, p. 35. — that he should condemn *metaphysical subtleties*, p. 53. — *idle speculations*, p. 12. — *the refinements of philosophy*, p. 12. &c. — when nothing is more true, than that the Trinitarian doctrine has its whole support in metaphysical distinctions, and scholastic subtleties; and is uniformly explained to us in language which no one understands.

Secondly, with equal surprize I hear this author aver, that these doctrines are *sufficiently evidenced in Scripture*,—that it is a *distinct* (i. e. plain) *Revelation*, which ought not to be set aside, p. 14.—that it is *manifestly revealed in Scripture*, p. 35. &c. &c. Whereas the fact is, that it originated in the schools of PLATO—that it was introduced by his disciples,—that the language of Scripture has been accommodated to the Platonic philosophy,—and that there is not one plain syllable in Scripture to justify the doctrine, which he says is so plainly taught there.

Thirdly, I really find it difficult to believe that the author was serious, when he says that the simple doctrine (that is, as he has stated it) is *plain and easy*, p. 5. — when it is so perplexed and confounded with metaphysical distinctions, incomprehensible and unintelligible to the unlettered Christian: and of which, it is very plain, the most learned have but very imperfect conceptions, if they have any at all. — We are told that the three in the Godhead, are not three *Persons*, nor three *Attributes*, but something between both, of which we have no distinct idea, and which bears no name.

Fourthly, nor is it less surprizing that the whole tenor of Mr. HAWKINS's book should be grounded
on

on a nonentity,—namely, that the doctrine of the Unitarians has its origin in *idle reasoning*, without any support from Scripture ; when the Truth is, that the absolute and unqualified unity of God is found there ; but the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, whether *nominal* or *real*, and the distinction of natures in the one person of Christ, are the fruit of distempered imaginations, and not only unaided by, but absolutely disavowed by the general language of Holy Scripture.

Fifthly, It is truly curious, that he should say so much of our present ignorance and frailty, as a reason why the speculations of Unitarians concerning a Being purely spiritual, ought not to be regarded—when all the speculation is on his side, and none on the side of Unitarians. These say that God is perfectly and absolutely *one* : Mr. HAWKINS says, that God in his essence is perfectly *one*, but in his relations, attributes, properties or persons, *three*. Unitarians say, that Christ was *one* individual Person or Being, as all others are. Mr. HAWKINS says, he possessed *two* natures, the one human the other divine, and that these two were united so as to become *one* person.

Sixthly, It is wonderful that he should lay so much stress upon these points, as being so much above our comprehensions, and that he should take so much pains to shew, that we must not expect perfectly to comprehend the *manner* of the Divine existence, when, as he says, all the works of nature are in some respects mysterious. This I say is truly wonderful ; in that Unitarians do much less pry into the *manner* of the Divine existence, than Trinitarians do. And the dispute is not at all, whether the manner of the Di-

vine existence is perfectly comprehensible by us, but whether there is sufficient ground, either from Reason or Holy Scripture, to believe *the fact*, that the Divine Being exists with a three-fold personality in the unity of his essence.—Unitarians are as forward to acknowledge the incomprehensibility of the Divine Being, as Trinitarians are. So that all this author has said to prove, that there are mysteries in nature, and therefore no doubt mysteries in the Deity, is not a whit more applicable to one than to the other; both equally believe it: but it would be strange indeed, that because God is in his mode of existence incomprehensible, we should therefore believe whatever the fancies and inventions of men shall dictate concerning it!

It will by this time begin to be enquired, what ends the author was likely to obtain by his publication. I profess I can see but three; which are—First, and principally, to shew his *moderation*, which is generally very great:—Secondly, to shew that the doctrine of the Trinity is less liable to the imputation of absurdity, according to the ideas of *nominal* Trinitarians, than according to the doctrines of *real* ones: and Thirdly, that a man who subscribes to the articles of the Church of England, should not subscribe with the mental reservation “as far as he thinks them scriptural—that he should be able to declare his unfeigned assent to them in a *literal* and *grammatical* acceptance, in the very words in which the test is offered to acceptance,—but that he nevertheless has *liberty of judgement in the interpretation of them*,”—which in fact is as much as to say, that he must believe the words as they stand in their *literal* and *grammatical* acceptance, but
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he may, by a mental reservation, save himself from subscribing to the *common and general meaning of those words* : or more briefly, that he must believe the words exactly as they stand, but he need not believe what is the obvious meaning of them. By this the reader will see how true it is that wise men can reason themselves out of their understandings ; and how, by a sort of metaphysical legerdemain, that which in the nature of things is impossible, becomes, in a moment, not only possible ; but so plain and familiar to our apprehensions, that it is matter of wonder that all the world does not see its absolute *beauty and consistency* !

Let us now examine Mr. HAWKINS's scheme, and see how far it is plain, consistent, and unexceptionable.

Mr. HAWKINS has been at some pains to shew that the distinction in the Godhead is not, or may not be, strictly *personal*, or as we usually understand the word *Person*, when we speak of men : and it shall be my business to prove from his own words, that he does, notwithstanding his declaration, understand the distinction to be a *personal* one. Let me however premise, that I consider myself as at full liberty to take advantage of his words, so far as they tend to discover his real sentiments ; especially as his Address was written with a view to clear away the exceptionable terms, which have been made use of in explaining the doctrine, and as in such a discourse no doubt the most unexceptionable terms are used.

We are told then, that “ in the one undivided Deity, there is *some certain distinction*.” Here Mr. HAWKINS appears to speak with great caution : he will make use of no names ; and therefore leaves it open to signify either a personal, or any other distinction : —

it is merely *some distinction*.—Again, he tells us, that “the word *Person* is adopted to express some real though inconceivable diversities in the Godhead, which have each their peculiar relations, attributes and properties.”—Here we may observe, that he goes a step further: here we are told, that it is not an imaginary diversity, but a real though inconceivable one, and these diversities in the Godhead have each their peculiar relations, attributes and properties.—He then goes still further, and speaks of these diversities as persons. This is plain by the use of the pronouns “*who* have each *their*.”—By the word *peculiar*, he no doubt means that which is *proper* to each, or what each has independent and exclusive of the others—for unless he means thus much, he is in my opinion unintelligible; and we are now, it should be remembred, examining that simple doctrine which is *plain and easy*, p. 5.—The words which Mr. HAWKINS uses to describe that which each of these distinctions peculiarly possesses, are *Relations, Attributes, Properties*.—By *relations* he no doubt means, that it is proper to the first to be considered in the character of a Father, to the second as a Son, to the third as a Holy Spirit.—Now I contend, that we can have no idea of any other than a person being a Father, nor of any other than a person being a Son; of course we have no right to consider them as any thing less than persons:—and it will follow that the man who thus speaks, however he may endeavour to hide his meaning in “fallacious language,” p. 35. does nevertheless believe, if he has any distinct belief at all, that each of them is properly a *person*.—And it will not do to say here, that although this be *above our reason*, yet it may be true—it will not do here, because there is

no evidence of the FACT: for if we admit that the Scriptures say that God is somehow *three*, and that personal characters are given to each of them; yet the Scriptures never say, that these three (to whom personal acts are said to be ascribed, and who are said to sustain distinct relations,) *are not persons*: and therefore if we admit a proper *plurality* in the Deity, we must admit a proper *personality*: unless indeed the aid of Reason is called in; and she will tell us that it cannot be so, seeing that if they are distinct *persons*, and *each is God*, they must be *three Gods*. And thus we see that both the *diversity* of which the author speaks, and the *distinct personality* also must be given up, or we must strike upon the *Scylla* of Tritheism on the one hand, or on the *Charybdis* of Sabellianism on the other.

And particularly awkward would the appeal to our shortsightedness appear in our author, when applied to this part of the contest; inasmuch as he has in his Note (b) p. 15. spoken out, as to the real distinct *personality* of the Son. "If Christ (says he) were not a *distinct person*, from the Father; although of the same common *nature*, it would be absurd to say, that he is of one and the same substance with him, as no person can properly be said to be consubstantial with himself." — And it is truly remarkable, that this gentleman should have taken such a peculiar method of making this point of proper distinct personality in the Deity appear—for in order to render another Trinitarian dogma intelligible, he has given us to understand, that it would be absurd to say the Son is of one substance with the Father, if they were not distinct persons—quoting the words "of one substance with the Father," from the council of Nice, with the
same

same apparent confidence in their DIVINITY, as some men would produce the words of HOLY SCRIPTURE.

Besides, this his charge of *absurdity* deserves the same censure he has used of Unitarians, with respect to verbal nicety, and plausible pretences about things above our comprehension : because the fact of personal distinction and consubstantiality in the Deity, are confessedly above his reason : and therefore he might (if you will give him credit) very safely believe, that the Son was consubstantial with the Father, without being another person, and that without being chargeable *by his brethren*, with any absurdity in his faith.

But this acknowledgement of his (contrary to our expectations) of the distinct and proper personality of the Son, will, before we have done, appear indispensibly necessary for him ; seeing that if neither the Father was properly, (that is) in the highest sense of the word, a PERSON ; nor the Son ; nor the Holy Spirit ; then, upon the Trinitarian hypothesis, there could be no *proper person* at all in the Deity,—the Deity would be all *relation*, all *attribute*, all *property*. How inconsistent this is, with common sense, and Holy Scripture, let those who have emerged from the prejudices of education, judge.

“ We assert (says Mr. HAWKINS) with reason that they are *distinct* ; because as to *personal properties*, one is not the other,” p. 34.—Here again Mr. HAWKINS admits, that in some sense the Father is not the Son or Holy Ghost, the Son is not the Father or Holy Ghost, nor the Holy Ghost the Father or the Son—This distinction is not (he says) of persons, but of personal *properties*—But if they are not strictly and properly personal distinctions, then I contend that
they

they are no distinctions at all, to the purpose of a *Trinity*: and into this vortex must Mr. HAWKINS's distinction of properties, from the persons in which those properties inhere, ultimately fall.

"Each (he tells us) have their peculiar attributes."
—Now the Divine attributes are wisdom, love, goodness, justice, and the like — and if each of them has his peculiar and proper *attributes*, then the wisdom, the love, the goodness, the justice of the Father, are not the wisdom, love, goodness, justice of the Son and Holy Ghost, and *e converso*—And if these attributes of the Father, are not the attributes of the Son and Holy Ghost, then the mind, understanding, and will of the Father, where wisdom, love, and goodness reside, are not the mind, will, and understanding of the Son and Holy Ghost: and it will follow, that there are in the Deity, three distinct and infinite *minds*; and three distinct and infinite minds, he seems to acknowledge would be three Gods.

He says they have each their peculiar *properties*. Let us take *Omnipotence* for an example.—If the Omnipotence of the Son or of the Holy Ghost, is the peculiar property of the Son and the Holy Ghost respectively; then it will follow, that the Omnipotence of the Son and Holy Ghost, is not the Omnipotence of the Father; nor is the Omnipotence of the Father, the Omnipotence of the Son; nor the Omnipotence of the Holy Ghost, the Omnipotences of either of the others. And if there are *three* ALMIGHTYS, there are most assuredly *three* GODS! And all that can be said in admiration or exaltation of the Divine *unity*, or in derogation of our own natural powers, in order to hide from our eyes these absurdities, must be considered in the light of
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subterfuges; and as inimical to the great and excellent cause of Truth.

But perhaps it will be said, that by each having his peculiar attributes and properties, is meant, that *justice* is peculiar to the *Father*, *love* to the *Son*, *wisdom* to the *Holy Ghost*: but this involves us in a difficulty equally tremendous—because this cannot be believed, unless we suppose a distinction altogether subversive of our notions of the Divine *unity*, and of the Divine *dignity*:—for, if *justice* be the peculiar attribute of the *Father*, the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* must be without this attribute, and then the unity is destroyed and God is imperfect!—if *love* be the peculiar attribute of the *Son*, then love is not an attribute either of the *Father* or of the *Holy Ghost*:—and if *wisdom* belongs peculiarly to the *Holy Ghost*, where are we to look (with reverence be it spoken) for the wisdom of the *Father* or the *Son*?

It may be said, that these are consequences, which though they appear to follow, really do not follow the doctrine Mr. HAWKINS contends for; I can only observe, that if these are not consequences of Mr. HAWKINS's own words, and of course of the doctrine he professes to believe, then I am miserably blind indeed!

Once more, p. 11. "It is only the existence of such a diversity as we understand by the denomination of persons, which we mean to assert in general terms." This is truly the safest way, if Mr. HAWKINS is of opinion that the doctrine will not stand the test of a *particular examination*, which is an opinion he may very safely adopt, without any fear that it will go to war with his reason, that best gift of Almighty God: however; this exposition of the soft term *diversity*,

sity, by the more harsh and exceptionable term *person*, amounts to an irrefragable proof, that Mr. HAWKINS's sentiments, and the way in which he affects to explain the doctrine, are not in perfect unison.

What labour has he used to explain himself! "It is only *the existence of such a diversity*, as we understand by the *denomination of persons*, which we mean to assert in general terms." — Who does not see the difficulty Mr. HAWKINS was involved in, when he produced this laboured exposition of his ideas? Who does not see, that in these most careful words, he acknowledges the real existence of distinct proper PERSONS in the Deity? — What do we understand by the denomination of a *person*? I answer, *an individual intelligent agent*. — Well then, Mr. HAWKINS tells us, that he only pleads for the *existence* of distinct, individual, intelligent agents in the Deity: He, to be sure says, "we mean to assert this *in a general way*." — By asserting it in a general way, he either means, that by the word *person*, we should not understand a person, and then we stand where we were, and the exposition is nugatory; — or he means, that we must understand the word as we *generally*, that is, as we *commonly* understand it, and thus his exposition will carry him too far; for then it will be said that distinct persons must have distinct beings, and distinct beings will be distinct Gods.

And if these are such plain facts, why all this outcry against *Unitarianism*? Rather, why this outcry against *Scripture*, against its coadjutor *reason*? Why afraid to have this matter thoroughly investigated? Why fear to disturb the people's sentiments? — If the peace of men is disturbed by teaching the *Unity* of God's person, the fault is with those by whom they

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have

have been lulled into a belief of that which has no existence.—When they awake from this state, they begin to resent the imposition—they, perhaps, will begin to doubt the certainty of religion; be thrown to the verge of infidelity:—but where this is the case, the fault is with those who caused them to sleep, not with those who awoke them.

I confess, however, that I doubt the fact; as it seems to me almost a contradiction in terms, that the proposing to a man a rational, scriptural faith, in the room of one which is irrational and absurd, should be the cause of turning his back upon the Scriptures. This would be like a man's residing in a subterraneous cavern, that he might enjoy more clearly the light of the sun.—In one point of view, however, the doctrine of the Trinity will be eminently useful to future generations.—This doctrine has, no doubt, contributed greatly to the growth of Deism; the Deists have used every argument human wit in some of the wisest heads could devise, in order to overturn the Christian system: and this has opened a door, an *effectual door* for the defence of it. Indeed, this appears to be an age, in which the Divine Providence has thrown fresh light upon the truth and divinity of the Gospel of Christ, tantamount almost to a new Revelation.—Would to God, that those who are called by the name of Christ, and who are the teachers of mankind, would unite in the noble, the benevolent, and generous endeavour, to clear the world of sentiments disgraceful to their own rational powers, subversive of the true Gospel of Christ, and dishonourable to God!

Mr. HAWKINS, in the quotations I have made, says,
 “In an abstract, or metaphysical sense, the title of
 GOD

God is more emphatically applied to the Father than to the other two."—He also calls the Father, the origin or fountain of the Godhead, as having a pre-eminence, a superiority, or priority of order, office, or causality.—Is it possible, that any one can read these words, without conceiving of the Father as very distant from the other two, and as eminently God?—If the Son and Holy Ghost are co-essential, consubstantial with the Father; if they are one divine essence with him, and always were so; it is impossible that the Father, in any abstract or metaphysical sense, (which in this case is no sense at all), can, as contradistinguished from the Son and Holy Ghost, be entitled to the emphatical use of that word, by which the one Supreme Deity is designed: nor can he, without impiety, be described as the *origin* or *fountain* of the Deity; nor can any pre-eminence, superiority, or priority of order, be applied to him, seeing there cannot be a priority, even of order, in that which is *eternal*: nor in the one Supreme Deity, can there be any superiority on account of office, or causality; because priority and superiority, imply *degrees*; and where there are degrees, there is *imperfection*, and that which is imperfect cannot be *God*.—Why then bewilder the mind with such inexplicable notions?—Why make it necessary that we should have waded through the deep and dangerous waters of metaphysics, before we can attain the simplest ideas of true Godhead?—And, more especially, Why this uproar against the use of metaphysical arguments, to refute a doctrine, without which that very doctrine will not admit of the most simple explication!—There is just as much reason that a man should attempt to prove the pre-eminence of

order, office, and causality of the Father from Scripture, and then deny his adversary the use of the Scriptures to oppose it!—If men must or will have resource to abstract ideas, and metaphysical subtleties, in order to explain these doctrines, they should, without repining, permit those who differ from them, to adduce the same *sort* of arguments, in order, if they can, to controvert those doctrines.

But if the dispute is always to be managed in a metaphysical way, it will be an endless dispute; because no deductions are less understood than metaphysical ones, and there is little hope of a remedy while men continue to pay as much deference to a metaphysical distinction, as they do to the express declarations of Scripture. Let me therefore exhort Mr. HAWKINS, and all who are treading in the same mysterious and unintelligible way, to attend to the plain doctrine of the Scripture, and be contented with it; to wit, that there is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all; and one Lord Jesus Christ, in whom God did dwell, in the fulness of his wisdom and power, and by whom he has been pleased to declare his will to mankind.

Of the Person of JESUS CHRIST.

Let us now for a moment attend to the *plain* and *easy* account Mr. HAWKINS has favoured the world with, concerning the person of our blessed Lord, and see whether this is less liable to exception.

He lays down the following postulata—1st, That Jesus Christ was a real human being, composed of a body and soul like our's.

2dly, That the man Jesus Christ was most perfectly and intimately united with the Godhead.

3dly,

3dly, That the divine and human natures in Christ, by reason of this ineffable union, constitute but one person.

4thly, That there is however no mixture or confusion of the divine and human natures.

Whoever takes a view of this doctrine, will see that it is enveloped in mist and darkness. The 1st extraordinary thing is, that an *immaterial* and a *material* substance, an *infinite* and a *finite* being, should be so intimately and perfectly united as to become but one PERSON.

The 2d is, that after having raised so much apparent doubt, about the proper distinct personality of the three in the Trinity, he should yet find, in one of the three, namely, the Son, a PERSON, which would not only suffice for its own nature, but for a human nature also.

The 3d is, that Jesus Christ should be "a real human being, composed of a body and soul, like our's;" or, as the Athanasian Creed expresses it — "perfect man, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting." — I say, it is very extraordinary that this should be the case, and yet that Christ Jesus should not be a *human person*. — It would be very natural if we were to ask, What more than a *human being*, or *perfect man*, composed of a body and *reasonable soul*, is necessary to constitute a *human person*? And it would be right to expect a full and satisfactory answer; and until such an answer should be given, it would be reasonable to suppose that it cannot be given. — And it will not solve the difficulty to admit that he was a proper human person, because there must then be two persons in Christ; unless it be also admitted, which is equally destructive of a Trinity and

and the Deity of Christ, that the union was not with *a divine person*, but with *a mere divine nature*—if any body knows what a mere nature is.—So that, take the matter up in any possible way we can, it will be found unnatural, irrational, and absurd: and I do contend and insist, that so far as a man persuades himself to give faith to these doctrines, so far he acts not only without, but against reason. And this furnishes an opportunity of justifying Dr. PRIESTLEY, where he represents Trinitarians as destitute of common sense; seeing that Dr. PRIESTLEY certainly intends this representation to go no farther, than that there is a want of rationality in their definitions of a Trinity and the hypostatic Union. He does not mean that they are fools in general; but that they are so only, when *these doctrines* and *their reason* come in contact.

The 4th is, that men of understanding should submit their judgments to such unwarrantable quibbling and shifting, as is necessary to the support of these doctrines—that they should, without the authority of Scripture, maintain principles so apparently opposite to common sense, and common observation, and so subversive of the laws of Nature, and of each other, as the doctrines of the TRINITY and of the HYPOSTATIC UNION. — Who can, without astonishment, behold men, otherwise wise and learned, who know of nothing in nature but individual persons, in individual natures, labouring, with all the zeal and might * they possess,

* “ We perceive a wonderful inclination in Christians towards something in religion so sublime as not to be understood: whereas the true sublimity of religion lies in its plainness; as the true excellence and dignity of man, consists in his being such a plain man as Jesus Christ was. This inclination is a remnant of the old education

possess, to shew, that God Almighty has *three* distinct *persons*, in one individual *essence* or *nature*; and that Jesus Christ possesses *two* distinct *natures*, in one individual *person*?

Were all men in full possession of themselves, it would be sufficient to observe, that this doctrine is delivered to us in a language totally unwarranted by Scripture. And that it has no pretence of protection, but in the mazes of scholastic subtlety and prevarication. But for the use of those who are yet bound by the fetters of education, let it be observed, that the Scriptures never speak of three *persons* in the Deity, take the term *person* in the mildest sense you will—nor do they speak of two natures in Christ Jesus—nor is there in the Scriptures one syllable of any union of natures in Christ—nor indeed of any other union of the man Christ Jesus with the Supreme God, that is not equally predicable of the disciples of Christ, as of himself: nay, when the Scriptures do speak, they go farther than Mr. HAWKINS could wish, and shew, that the union of Christ with God (if there was any such union) was not an union with that relation in the Deity which is manifested to us by the appellation of *the Son*—but with that which is denominated *the Father*.

The three following things I shall now attempt to prove:—1st, that the Scriptures do not speak of any *personal* union of the man Christ with the Godhead.

2dly, That the union which the Scriptures do speak of, is an union of the man Christ with the Father; or, which is the same thing, with *God*.

education given this country by monks and priests, whose majesty stood in the credulousness of their followers." --- ROBINSON'S Sermon, page 302.

3dly, That

3dly, That the union which the Scriptures speak of, of the man Christ Jesus with the Godhead, is an union which the true disciples of Christ are as truly the subjects of as Christ himself is.

As to the first of these points, it is manifestly clear from the Holy Scriptures, that God is not *personally* united to the man Christ Jesus :—1. Negatively, because the Scriptures never say so; and, 2. affirmatively, because the Scriptures declare that the Word was made flesh : not that it was *united* to it, Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο *—That Christ Jesus *partook* of flesh and blood †, (as his disciples partook of them) : not that he was *united* to flesh and blood ‡—That he who was in the form of God, emptied himself, ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε † : not that he assumed another nature—That he was *made* in the likeness of man § : not that he was *united* to a man—That the Godhead dwelt bodily in Christ || : not that the Godhead was *united* to Christ; unless, indeed, *inhabitation* and *personal union* are synonymous terms.—Here is then no union at all spoken of, or hinted at : and it will become Mr. HAWKINS to enquire seriously from what source he derived his information. Let him put this question home to his understanding and heart, and perhaps he will think more favourably of that doctrine which endeavours to support the absolute UNITY of God.

And in addition to these observations, let it be remarked, that a distinction of natures in Christ, is never once mentioned in the Scriptures.—He is never once spoken of as God and man; if we understand by this phrase that he was *both* God and man.—He may indeed be spoken of, in some places, as a God—in others, as a man :—but is it reasonable to suppose,

* John i. 14. † Heb. ii. 14. ‡ Phil. ii. 7. § *Ibid.* || Col. ii. 9.

that this was intended to teach us that he was both God and man?—It is surely more reasonable to suppose that the man Christ Jesus, on account of his super-eminent character, and the divinity of his mission and office, might be sometimes called a God *. However, it does not appear that he is ever so called. On the contrary, Christ and God are frequently mentioned in contradistinction to each other, &c —*Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*—*There is one God, and one Lord, &c. &c.*—Besides, is this the way in which a doctrine so exceedingly momentous would probably have been taught?—Would so dread an idea have been left to comparisons, to implications, to deductions, to inferences?—Would it not have been positively expressed?—Would not every page of the sacred volume have sung so wonderful a theme?

Perhaps it may be supposed, that the distinction of natures in the person of Christ, is pointed out, Rom. ix. 5. where it is said—“Of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came.” And it will be said, that by the words *concerning the flesh*, must be meant the human nature; and that this distinction shews he possessed another nature. But, indeed, this is not the fact.—The phrase is, *κατα σαρκι*. And if the Reader will take the pains to turn to the following passages, Rom. iv. 1. ix. 3. — 1 Cor. i. 26. x. 18. — 2 Cor. v. 16. x. 2. xi. 18.—Eph. vi. 5.—Col. iii. 22. he will find

* How apposite is our Lord's significant observation to the Jews, to this part of our subject.—The Jews had charged him with blasphemy, in saying that he was one with the Father; he replies, “Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them Gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken; (*that is*, this is a real Scripture-truth) say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, *I am the Son of God?*” John x. 34---37.

the same phrase used in them all, and he will perhaps be satisfied, that no such distinction either is, or could possibly be intended. At least, that this meaning cannot be admitted, unless we will also admit the same distinction as to *Abraham*—to the whole *Jewish nation*—to the *wise* among mankind—to the *Israelites*—to the apostle *Paul*—and to *any man*:—For to all of these is this phrase applied, in the passages I have above referred to.

2d.—I come now to speak of the second point; *to wit*, that the union the Scriptures speak of is with the FATHER.—“I and my *Father* are *one*,” John x. 31. 38.—“The *Father*, which DWELLETH in me, he doth the works,” John xiv. 10.—“In him DWELLETH all the fulness of the *Godhead* bodily,” Col. ii. 9.—“He that hath seen *me*, hath seen the *Father*,” John x. 9.—“Thou, *Father*, art in *me*, and *I* in *thee*,” John xvii. 21. “*We* are *one*,” ver. 22.—But that these passages speak not of a personal union, will appear in examining the third point.

3d.—That the union which the Scriptures speak of, of the man Christ Jesus and the Godhead, is an union which the true disciples of Christ are as truly subjects of as Christ is. For ample satisfaction on this head, we need only give due consideration to the following passages: John xiv. 17. “The Spirit of Truth, (*that is*, the *power of God*, even the *Father*) dwelleth with *you*, and shall be in *you*.”—ver. 23. “If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my *Father* will love him, and *we* will come unto *him*, and make *our* abode with *him*.”—ver. 20. “At that day ye shall know that *I* am in my *Father*, and ye in *me*, and *I* in *you*.”—chap. xvii. 21. “I pray that *they* all may be *one*, as thou, *Father*, art in *me*, and *I* in *thee*, that *they* also may be *one in us*.”—ver. 22, 23. “The
glory

glory which thou, *Father*, gavest *me*, I have given *them*, that *they* may be one, *even as we are one*; I in them, and *thou* in *me*."—John iii. 24. "*He* that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in *him*, and *he* in *him*."—chap. iv. ver. 4. "*Ye* are of *God*; greater is *he* that is in *you*, than *he* that is in the world."—ver. 12. "*God* dwelleth in *us*."—ver. 15. "*Who*soever shall confess that *Jesus* is the Son of *God*, *God* dwelleth in him."—ver. 16. "*He* that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in *God*, and *God* in *him*."

Whatever this author has said about *God's* suffering, in a nature which is passible and mortal; and that *God* incarnate died, *in respect* to his human nature, p. 17. are ideas so replete with unmixed nonsense, that (to say the least of them) they do not deserve an answer. Did *God* suffer?—Did *God* die?—If he did suffer and die, say so—If he did not suffer and die, why not say so?—Do not tell us *he* suffered in another nature; because these words bear no meaning, they convey no ideas.

Besides, we might enquire, what is meant by a nature suffering, by a nature dying? How is it that there was but one person in *Christ*, and yet that person did not die? Was it the person of *Christ*, or one of his natures only, which suffered in the garden of *Gethsemane*; which was sorrowful even unto death; which cried out upon the cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*, and there gave up its breath, and died? Was it the supreme *God*, or was it a man? And if a man, was an abstract nature sorrowful? Did an abstract nature cry out thus mournfully on the cross? Did an abstract nature give up its breath and die?

" Doth not Wisdom cry aloud,
 " And Understanding raise her voice,
 " At the top of the high-places on the way,
 " At the meeting of the cross-paths stationed?
 " At the gate-ways, at the entrance of the city,
 " At the door-ways, she exclaimeth,
 " To you, O men, do I call;
 " To you, sons of men, is my voice:
 " O ye imprudent, learn to be discreet;
 " O ye foolish, learn to be wise."

HOBSON'S Prov. of Solomon.

OBSERVA-

OBSERVATIONS

UPON A

PUBLICATION,

INTITLED,

HORÆ SOLITARIÆ:

In a Letter to the Rev. Mr. HARPER.

DEAR SIR,

I RECEIVED your's, accompanying a book, called *Horæ Solitariae*; which I have, with great attention, and I believe with candor, reviewed.—The author is, no doubt, a learned man—his *Essay* is a very ample proof of it.—I must, however, observe, that his mode of reasoning is exceedingly inconclusive: Like most writers on that side the question, he takes for granted that which is the main point to be proved. He attempts to prove his doctrine by the application of a great variety of names to Christ—taking it for granted, in almost every material instance, that those names are properly applicable to Christ, without proving it; or he argues for his divinity from such names as do by no means imply it. It may well be said, as you have done, that Trinitarians shrink from answering this book. It would

would, in one sense, be a very arduous task to do it : I mean, in wading through such a great collection of passages, and in replying to the impertinent *remarks* this author has made upon them :—but nothing would be more easy than to shew, that his *arguments* are inconclusive and futile, and his *inferences* void of any foundation. You will be pleased to observe, that I here distinguish his arguments from his remarks ; and you will see that I think the difficulty in answering this author, would arise rather from the quantity of his matter, than from the quality of his speculations.

If an arbitrary and fanciful application of passages and names to Jesus Christ—If declaring proofs to be clear, cogent, irrefragable, indubitable ; without shewing how they are *clear*, &c.—If the use of new and unintelligible language--If making bold inferences, without premises—If highly and rapturously extolling the *deity* and *dignity* of our Saviour —If enthusiastic exclamations and Hutchinsonian dogmas—will prove the point he contends for ; then I will admit that this author is unanswerable.

The great ardour which he shews, arises from a pre-conceived notion of the Hutchinsonian covenant of grace. I call it the Hutchinsonian covenant, because it has its origin in the wild and ungovernable fancy of a gentleman of that name.—That the ever-blessed God graciously purposed to bestow *eternal life* upon those who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, a Christian cannot deny : but that God covenanted with himself—stipulated terms with himself—bound himself to himself, by a conditional execration—is both fanciful and impious. It has no foundation in Scripture—it is

no part of Divine Revelation—it ought, therefore, to be rejected from the Christian Creed, as a profane human invention.

It is impossible to read this author without seeing, that the presupposal of this covenant, is the groundwork of his assurances, and the real foundation of his licentious application of passages in the Old Testament to Jesus Christ. But it becomes him and his abettors, to consider seriously, whether the Scriptures do any where teach, that three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, entered into a covenant-engagement together for the redemption of mankind? A declaration of this sort, which I contend is a declaration totally unsupported by Scripture, looks somewhat more like presumption and madness, than any thing which can be found in the writings of Arians or Socinians.

In the first onset of your author's performance, he should have said less about irrefragable *proofs*, and should have *proved* incontrovertibly, from the plain language of Holy Scripture, that such a covenant was made. Had he set out in this way, he would have furnished a good apology for the remainder of his performance: but as the case now stands, he is inexcusably rash and irreverent, in his whole conduct: and I do assure you, that of all the books I have yet read, none ever raised so great an aversion in my mind against the doctrine it contends for, as this has done. It has tended more firmly to root and establish me in that blessed foundation of all Truths, the unqualified UNITY of God.

But in order that I may not be charged with exclaiming without reason; and as the throwing down this foundation-stone of a tripartite covenant, will effectually ruin the whole fabric of this profane building;

building; I propose now to examine what this author has said in support of this doctrine of a Divine covenant: and then we shall be able to see whether he has proved that the three Divine persons did covenant together, and assure upon oath, for the redemption of mankind.

His great argument in proof of this point, is taken from the Hebrew name God, אלהים; which, he tells us, is derived from the Hebrew אלה, *to assure upon oath*. Now let us admit for a moment, that the word אלהים, is derived from the Hebrew אלה, and that this word, אלה, signifies *to assure upon oath*, or, as the more gross Hutchinsonians make it, *to swear to a covenant; to be laid under a conditional execration**—Yet, will any man, (who is not under the controul of a capricious imagination) without he has some other strong corroborating evidence, or some other cause to serve than the cause of TRUTH, contend, that this word being used of the true God, proves that he is composed of *three* PERSONS, and that these *three* PERSONS covenanted together for the redemption of mankind? I will venture to say, that no honest and impartial enquirer would come into such a notion.—If, indeed, it was elsewhere in Holy Scripture, repeatedly declared that God did so covenant, that each of the *three* did assure upon oath, that they did each swear to the others to perform this covenant—then we might, (horrid and profane as the idea is) be inclined to suppose that this name was meant to teach the same thing. But this author has put the cart before the horse—he brings this forward as *prima facie* evidence, that such a covenant was made, and then makes all the declarations of Scripture follow it, and stoop to it.—But how does this word prove the fact; admitting the meaning of it

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* See Catcot's Sermon upon this subject, p. 8.

to be as he has alledged?—Is it impossible that there should be in the God of Nature, any other plurality than of *persons*?—Admit that the word is used, because God had sworn, had covenanted; is it impossible to refer that covenant to God's gracious assurances to *Abraham*—and to refer the plural form of the word to the multitude of his perfections? or to the two immutables, the *promise* and *oath* of God, which the apostle magnifies, Heb. vi. 18. and which take in exactly your author's ideas of *assurance* and *oath*?—If these things are not *impossible*, and the Scriptures do not declare which of them is meant—or that either of them is meant—why may not this be the truth, and not that, or neither of them? They are both of them guesses, and who shall say which of them is right?

I know it is a difficult matter, when men have espoused notions, to desert them for others, though they may be more truly rational, and have better evidence to support them:—and I shall not be surprized if you treat with indifference these observations.—I will however venture to declare, that in so doing, you will do injustice to the TRUTH—to yourself—and to the flock of which you are the shepherd.

Your author's note, p. 14. led me to these reflections; and I cannot help further observing, that he does very unwarrantably, and very absurdly, leap from his explanation of this word אלה, as signifying to *assure upon oath*, to the passage 1 John v. 7. as if they meant the same thing. To assure upon oath, bears at least two meanings; it means to confirm a promise by an oath, and to bear witness upon oath. Now the sense of the word אלה, according to this author, signifies the former of these two; and the passage 1 John v. 7. does not at all agree to

the latter; and therefore cannot, without absurdity, be compared with that word, as deduced from it, or parallel with it: For however the word אלה may signify *to execrate, to swear, or an oath administered to a witness*; it is not so clear that it signifies *to testify, or bear witness*: And however truly the passage 1 John v. 7. may speak of *bearing witness*; yet no one ever pretended that it referred to any evidence delivered *upon oath*.—But this reference of your author is one instance, among hundreds in his book, of the great attention he has paid to *words*, and how little regard he has had to *things*. And his declaration, p. 17. where he says, “that the title *Aleim*, both in its construction and use, *expressly declares* a plurality of persons in the divine essence,” may justly be considered as a standard by which we may judge of his general regard for TRUTH.—I have no doubt but I shall be pardoned, if I contradict this bold assertion, and protest, that the word does not *expressly declare*, nor even *imply* any such thing.

The nature and extent of this covenant, we are told, p. 25. are summarily expressed, Exod. vi. 5. 8. You will be pleased to observe, that your author is now going to adduce his PROOF, that such a covenant of grace as we have heard of between the three persons, was actually made. The words are :--“I have remembered my covenant: Wherefore, say unto the children of Israel, *I am JEHOVAH*, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians [spiritual as well as temporal enemies], and I will rid you out of their bondage; and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you for *ALEHIM*; and ye shall know that I am *Jehovah* your

your **ALEHIM**, who bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage:—I am **JEHOVAH**.”

Let any unprejudiced person read these words, and then say, whether they speak of a covenant made between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the redemption of mankind. Will not every candid mind revolt at such a palpable imposition as is here intended? The words contain a mere declaration, that God, as the God of Abraham, would, in consequence of the promise he made to him, deliver the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage which they then endured—and they produced as a proof that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before all worlds, covenanted to deliver the elect from the eternal punishment and dereliction which sin hath deserved!

You will surely join with me in reprobating this very unwarrantable liberty—You surely will not hesitate to say, that this conduct is disgraceful to Christianity—and that if the passages he has produced are admitted as proofs of the point they are by him intended to prove, we may, by the same sort of means, prove any thing we please.

What I have hitherto said, has been upon the admission that **אלה** signifies *to assure upon oath*. I now contend, that there is in Scripture no sufficient reason to induce a belief that this word **אלה**, in this sense of it, is the word from which **אלהים** is derived.

If in pursuing this argument I should alledge, that the Hebrew verb **אלה**, signifies *to adjure, to cause to swear*—I am inclined to think that your author would find it difficult to prove, that this is not its meaning. The fact

is, that אלה does signify *to adjure*; there is therefore as much reason that אלהים should be thus understood, as that its meaning should be deduced from an ante-mundane transaction of the Trinity; of which very transaction this word is the only existing proof, though it says nothing at all about it. If he doubts that the word sometimes signifies *to adjure, to cause to swear*, in the sense of השבע; let him compare Genesis xxiv. 2. with ver. 41. of that chapter; in which ver. 41. it is plain that Abraham uses this word when speaking of his servant's oath, in the sense of adjuration, or a causing to swear, ver. 2. and from which very circumstance, he calls the oath taken by his servant, HIS OATH, he having caused him to swear, כאלה, "from this mine oath." See also, 1 Sam. xiv. 24.—2 Chron. vi. 22.—Deut. xxix. 10, 12, 14, 30.—Ezek. xvii. 13.—all of which passages contain plain proofs that the אלה is not he who swears, but he by whom the oath is imposed.

See also, Prov. xxix. 24. "He heareth cursing, "and bewrayeth it not:" which Bishop PATRICK, who cannot be suspected of partiality, thus paraphrases:—"Being *adjured* to discover what he knows, he will not declare it*."

And probably this author's difficulty would be equally great, if I were to contend, that it signifies *power, or strength*; and so refers to the Almighty power: and its plural form, to the divers manifestations of that power.

Nay, he would not find it a very easy matter to prove, that it is not in a plural form, merely in compliance with common usage—or that its plural form is

* See SHARP's Dissertation on *Elohim* and *Berith*.

not a mere idiom of the Hebrew language; especially as it is used with singular pronouns, &c.

But that it was not meant to point out any plurality of persons, appears to me to be more particularly probable, in that there seems to be a manifest caution against any such sense or construction of the word, in Deut. vi. 4. "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is *"ONE Lord;"* *that is,* "Do not suppose that the true God is more gods than one: for he who is our *"Aleim,* our God, is *one אלהים, JEHOVAH."*—He says nothing about *essence*, or *person*; and therefore we must understand him to mean, that he is, both in *essence* and *person*, *ONE*.—And I lay the more stress upon this passage, because if any idea of a Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Godhead, had then existed, it must of necessity have been brought forward in this place, and explained in such terms as would place it beyond the possibility of doubt.

And that it has not its origin in any ante-mundane covenant, but was a mere appellation of the Divine Being, is pretty plain; in that if it had had its origin in any such covenant, its application would have been so exclusively appropriate to the true God, that it would have been, beyond all contradiction, incommunicable to any other. Whereas this word is used of *angels*, of *men*, and, in numberless places, even of *idols**: which is demonstrative proof that it has no such meaning appropriated to it as is pretended. At any rate, while the exact meaning and derivation of this word cannot be ascertained, and while it is applicable to others, in

* Exod. xxiii. 32.---Numb. xxxiii. 4.---Deut. xii. 30, 31, 32.---Josh. xxiii. 7.---Judg. ii. 3.---1 Sam. xvii. 43.---2 Sam. vii. 23. 1 Kings xi. 8.---2 Kings xvii. 33.---1 Chron. x. 10.---Isa. xxxvii. 19.---Jer. xlviii. 35.

whom

whom no such distinction as in the supposed Trinity exists; it is surely stretching conjecture too far, to contend that it *expressly declares* any thing.

The learned Dr. GEDDIS is of opinion, that “ the word *Aleim*, in its primitive signification, denotes strength, power, the *Mighty One*, *ισχυρος*. Nor (says he) have I yet seen any cogent reason to depart from this most ancient and commonly-received opinion. It is so natural to affix the idea of superior power to the Deity, that it could hardly fail of entering into some of his first appellations.” — GEDDIS’s *Critical Remarks on Genesis* i. 1.

“ How the plural form *אלהים* came to be in such general use among the Jews, may, perhaps, be thus rationally accounted for:—Before the vocation of Abraham, Polytheism seems to have been the general religion: the gods, therefore, would be a prevailing term. The error in worship was rectified by the Hebrew legislator: but stubborn language hath seldom been seen to bend, even to legislative power. Thus *אלהים* obstinately kept its place in the Hebrew dialect: but its meaning was restricted to one God, by putting the concordant verb, &c. in the singular.”—*Ibid.*

The Essay on the Trinity, which finishes your author’s performance, is certainly replete with learning. The author has taken a great deal of pains to prove that many Heathen nations had an idea of a Trinity: And if he had proved that all the nations upon the face of the earth had such a notion, the research for this information might have pleased an inquisitive mind, but could do little towards enlightening it, or benefiting the cause of true religion. It would be no difficult matter to prove, that all nations under
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the sun have been *idolaters*, worshippers of stocks and stones; but it would be absurd to adduce this as a proof that *we* ought to be idolaters, that *we* ought to worship the works of men's hands.

Your author would have done well if he had shewn, that all these nations had derived their information from patriarchal tradition: but this he has not shewn; he has merely conjectured it—and conjecture will not do, as the ground of a DIVINE FAITH.—The conjecture of any other man is as good as his; and I conjecture that their notions of something *three-fold* were the fruit of their own imaginations, as most of their notions were; and I conjecture, with greater probability of truth, that the Christian Trinity was borrowed from PLATO. Those of the ancient fathers who had been of the Platonic school, will convince you, if you will take the pains to read them, how much they were pleased in being able to bring the Trinity of PLATO, and the Trinity of corrupted Christianity, which had already been borrowed from it, into unison.

The *triform* symbols*, and representations, which this author has met with, are certainly favourable to the doctrine of the Trinity; so far as they go to prove, that the nations in which these discoveries have been made, were not totally ignorant of the number THREE: but this does not prove that there was any thing mysterious in them, any more than the Scriptures prove that there are a Trinity of persons in the Unity of the Divine essence.---If this author had taken the number *seven*, he would perhaps have been still more successful; and would have found it more than equally the

* I wonder that this author omitted the mention of CERBERUS.
---Why would not this answer his purpose?

subject of *mystery* and *perfection*. Had he taken this, he would have found seven days in a week, a sabbath on the seventh day, another every seventh year; the seventh or climacteric year; and of other climacterics, by the multiplication of that number; he would have found that it was male and female, because a compound of letters even and odd, as three and four; and that, comprehending the three and four, it is a number wholly perfect. He would have heard of seven stars, Amos v. 8. Rev. i. 16. of seven churches, seven candlesticks, seven angels, seven horns, seven eyes, seven thunders, of a dragon with seven heads and seven crowns; of seven spirits, Matth. xii. 45. and a thousand others. But this would not answer your author's purpose so well as to find out the mysterious *threes*.—As he is fond of Heathen fables, he might have found plenty of *two-formed* beings, from which he might prove any thing he pleased of *dualities*: witness the *Tritons*, the *Syrens*, the *Harpies*, &c. &c.

But omitting a search after other numbers, this author has ransacked half the globe to find out *DIAGRAMS*, *SYMBOLS*, *HIEROGLYPHICAL REPRESENTATIONS*, and *CABBALISTICAL ENIGMAS*, so far only as they relate to the number *THREE*. And he has been pretty successful in his search: his *ZOROASTER*, his *HERMES*, and his *PLATO*, are happy proofs of the divinity of his doctrine. He has sometimes, indeed, ventured upon this search on Holy Ground: and how he has succeeded there, we shall presently see.

There are three cases insisted on as proofs of the Trinity. One is, the three-fold repetition of words applied to the Deity—A second is, the use of words of a plural form, joined with pronouns and verbs singular—The third is, the use of plural pronouns.

Let

Let us for a moment coolly and dispassionately consider these three cases — and see whether they really do contain any plain and satisfactory proofs of the point in question.

The first then is, the three-fold repetition of words applied to the Deity:—The *God* of Abraham—*God* of Isaac—*God* of Jacob, &c.—*Holy, Holy, Holy* Lord God, &c. &c. Those who are acquainted with the Hebrew language need not be informed, that it abounds with phrases of which we have nothing in our's, similar or correspondent. It is well known, that the superlative degree is expressed by means very different to those which we use; and that the repetition of the noun, or other word, is an elegant mode of speech in that language, of which, in some respects, our's has nothing correspondent. And the passages I have above produced, are instances of each of these: the one of the repetition of the noun; the other, of the superlative degree.

A great variety of these idioms are to be met with in the Old Testament.—I shall, by a few instances, completely overthrow the idea that the three-fold use of the word *God* is a proof of the Trinity, as the author of *Horæ Solitariae* tells us it is; where he says, that this three-fold repetition intimates the Trinity, &c.—The first instance I shall produce is from Exod. iii. 6. 15. and iv. 5. “I am the GOD of thy Fathers, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, the GOD of Jacob.”—Now here he will observe, that there is a *four-fold* repetition of the name GOD—and if God's being declared to be the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, intimates that there are *three persons* in the Deity; then, his being declared to be the God of the fathers, the God of

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Abraham,

Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, must be admitted to intimate that there are *four* such persons—And the futility of this author's observation will further appear, if we refer to Exod. iii. 16. where this description of the Divine Being is varied, and the word *God* but twice repeated: "the Lord *God* of the fathers, and the *God* of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob:" for if his argument is good that the three-fold repetition intimates that they are three; then, it is a good argument that this *two-fold* repetition intimates that there are only *two*. And a comparison of these three passages, wherein the name of God is repeated twice, thrice, and four times, will be sufficient to convince any reasonable man, that it is a mere Hebrew idiom—a mere elegance of speech; and is intended to shew nothing but the pathos and energy of the writer or speaker.

Let us now attend to that other mode of expression; "*Holy, Holy, Holy, &c.*"—for this triple use of the word *Holy*, it is contended, points out the three persons in the Trinity. The more moderate commentators do indeed conceive, that nothing more than the superlative nature of God's holiness is pointed out by the repetition of the word; it being usual in the Hebrew to make a repetition of words serve for the superlative degree. And it may be observed, that this is not the only place in the Old Testament, where the superlative degree is so expressed, without possessing any such mysterious tendency as some Trinitarians pretend.

Thus, for instance, Jer. xxii. 29. "*O Earth, Earth, Earth, &c.*" No one, I should suppose, will pretend that this three-fold repetition of the word *Earth*, is an allusion to any three-fold mystery contained in the earth:

earth : but it is plainly a sort of energetic and emphatical mode of expression, tending to convey ideas of the importance of the subject in hand. So again, Ezek. xxi. 27. "I will *overturn, overturn, overturn* it, &c." which are words, no doubt; suited to express, in a most emphatical manner, a complete and effectual *overthrow*. See also, 2 Sam. xviii. 33. "O my *son* Absalom, my *son*, my *son*," &c. Now Absalom was but one son, one being; and in the three-fold repetition of the word *son*, there was couched no mystery---the repetition was merely expressive of the ardor of David's affection. So, Exod. xxxiv. 6. יהוה יהוה אל "the LORD, the LORD GOD," &c. JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH, AL, all names of God.

But the Scriptures of the Old Testament do not always express themselves in this way, by a *triple* repetition, but frequently by a *double* one : Thus, Deut. xvi. 20. where the word צדק is twice repeated, to express, with more vehemence and emphasis, how strictly and universally just it is our duty to be : and is properly rendered, in the superlative degree, "altogether just."

So, Psal. xxii. 1. אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֵי ; "My GOD, my GOD," &c. denoting the ardor of the speaker.

See also, Gen. xiv. 10.—And the valley of Siddim was בארת בארת, "slime-pits, slime-pits;" *i. e.* there were a great many slime-pits in the vale of Siddim : It was full of slime-pits, as we would say.

So, Gen. xxxii. 16.—And he delivered into the hand of his servants, עדר עדר, "*flock, flock.*"

So, Deut. xxviii. 43.—"The stranger, &c. shall get upon the מעלה מעלה, *high, high*; and thou shalt go down מטה מטה, *low, low*: and 2 Kings x. 4. "And they were exceedingly afraid, ויראו מאד מאד, *most, most* afraid."

1 Kings, viii. 27.—“ Behold, *השמים ושמי השמים*, the heavens, and heavens of the heavens.”

1 Sam. ii. 3. — “ Talk no more so *גברה גברה*, proudly, proudly ;” *that is*, so exceeding proudly.

So of pronouns ; *משנבי ומפלטי לי*, “ My high tower, and my deliverer to me.”—Now, if we may credit the Trinitarian mode of exposition, this triple use of the pronoun, if it had been used of the Deity, would have been considered as a striking and irrefragable proof of a Trinity :—but as it is used of a man, it is nothing more than a redundancy peculiar to the Hebrew language.

A case very similar to this is to be met with, Gen. xlix. ver. 1, 2. “ That *I* may tell you, &c.”—“ Hear ye sons of *Jacob*, and hearken unto *Israel*, your father.”

So Exod. xxx. 11. 16. where the noun-substantive is repeated : --- “ And *the Lord* spake unto Moses, saying—that it may be a memorial before *the Lord*.”—So, ver. 17 and 20. Also, ver. 34. 37. So, chap. xxxi. 1. 3. and ver. 12. 15. &c. &c. &c. So, Gen. iv. 23.—“ And *Lamech* said, Ye wives of *Lamech*.”

Indeed, language of this kind is so common in the Old Testament, that it is unnecessary to multiply instances : It is however wonderful, that men should see and know this, without being convinced, that instances of this nature, when used of the Deity, cannot possibly mean any other than when they are applied to men, or to any other thing : and a thorough conviction of the gross obstinacy and perverseness of prejudice, is the only way in which we can reconcile to our ideas, how it is that rational beings can act thus inconsistently.

Candor and liberality of sentiment, which should be the glory of rational creatures, are frequently, in this

this day, treated with a disrespect they do not deserve—and if we may believe the language of some men, we must be inclined also to believe, that they consider a liberal mind as inimical to Truth.—So effectually have men blinded themselves in this way, that every thing which is imputable to the narrow and contracted mind of an ecclesiastical bigot, is most profusely imputed to men who endeavour to free their minds from the fetters of implicit faith, and to exercise, with honesty and integrity, that reason which God has, in the abundance of his goodness, given to them. The issue of an examination of the passages I have just produced, and the comparison of them with those which I have endeavoured to explain, will mark the respective characters of the bigot and of the generous mind. The one will admit that these redundancies are plainly idioms of the Hebrew language; that they are clearly used, in order to express any thing with more emphasis, ardency, and vehemence; that therefore, when God is described as thrice *holy*, it indicates his superlative and ineffable holiness; and that it is no more intended to intimate a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, than the double use of the term *קדש*, Deut. xvi. 20. is a proof that the people to whom Moses spake, possessed two persons in their respective essences—the other will contend, that the passages I have adduced, do, to be sure, prove that Exod. iii. 6. and Isa. vi. 3. are not the only places where words are *repeated*: and that those other places do shew, that words may be repeated without intimating a plurality of persons in the essence of the thing spoken of: yet that this does not satisfy them, that the repetition in those other passages where God is spoken of, does not imply such a plurality. And if the plain question were asked,

asked, Why they are not satisfied?—the honest answer would be, *Because they are determined not to be satisfied.*

If you are dissatisfied with what I have above observed concerning those repetitions, I recommend you to the grammar of PHILIP LEVI, a converted Jew, published at Oxford, in 1705; who makes the following observation:—"We reckon the repetition of
 "the same *substantive* and *adjective*, *pronoun*, &c. and the
 "concurrence of two synonymous words in *regimen*, as
 "pleonasm, because they are so in the common opinion
 "of most writers: But as to our own opinion, we
 "esteem them to be no *figures*, but real *proprieties*, and
 "peculiar *elegancies* of the Hebrew language; either
 "expressing an *emphasis* or *superlative degree*, of some-
 "what or other; in giving *injunctions* and *prohibitions*,
 "with greater *strictness* and *severity*, or casting a *clearer*
 "light upon the matters discoursed of, or distributing
 "generals into their several *particulars*; or, lastly, set-
 "ting forth the great *zeal*, *concern*, and *affection* of
 "the speaker or writer:" p. 151.

2. The use of words of a plural form, with pronouns, &c. singular, I promised next to consider, and to shew that this practice contains nothing mysterious.—I admit that *singular* pronouns, verbs, &c. are generally used with the *plural* word *Aleim*: but does that necessarily prove that *Aleim* is to be considered in a plural sense—and that the singular pronoun or verb, proves an unity in that plurality?—Is it not more rational, more plain and natural, to contend, that the use of those *singular* pronouns and verbs, is a demonstrative proof that the word *Aleim* is not to be understood in a *plural* sense?

That plural and singular nouns are joined, will appear by the following examples:—Gen. xlii. 30.
 הָאִישׁ אֲדֹנָי אֶרֶץ; "The man, the lords of that land;"
 and,

and, Gen. xl. 1. לאדניהם למלך; " Their lords, the king : " and, Zechar. ix. 9. ועל עיר בן אתנות; " And upon a colt, the foal of asses. "

And that verbs singular are sometimes joined to nouns plural, will appear by 1 Sam. xvi. 4. ויהרדו זקני העיר לקראתו ויאמר; " And the elders (plur.) of the city, went trembling to meet him, and said (sing.)—And, Exod. xxi. 4. אם-אדנין יתן-לו אשה; " If his masters, (plur.) give, " (sing.)

Verbs plural also sometimes go along with nouns singular: as, Lev. xx. 4. ואם העלם יעלמו עם הארץ את-עיניהם; " And if the people of the land, (sing.) will hide (plur.) their eyes : " and, Psal. cxix. 103. מה-נסלצו חלכי אמרתך; " How sweet are (plur.) thy word, (sing.) to my taste ! "

3. Plural pronouns, when the Deity is the subject, are sometimes used, and are supposed to indicate a plurality of persons in the Godhead. But after what has been said on the other points, I think this need not much be insisted on—it appears pretty clear from what has been observed, that it would be folly of no small magnitude for us to contend, that because the Deity, in one or two instances, uses a plural pronoun, as, " Who will go for us ? " that therefore it must of necessity follow, that there is in God a plurality of persons. And this observation will be sufficiently verified, if we attend to one single passage, I have accidentally met with, where the pronoun is plural, although the substantive is singular, Gen. xv. 11. וירד העיט וישב אותם; " And the fowl (sing.) came down and he drove them (plur.) away. "—See also the two passages last above quoted, Lev. xx. 4. and Psal. cxix. 103.—It will perhaps be answered, that the passage I have adduced, Gen. xv. 11. is against the point I am pleading

pleading for; because the plural pronoun really was used of a plural number, *i. e.* of fowls. But such an answer would shew that the objector does not understand my meaning, and the use I propose to make of the passage; which is to shew, that *nouns* and their *pronouns* do not always agree in number: And it is of small consequence whether the variation is in the noun or pronoun; seeing that a variation in either of them will prove, that no stress should be laid upon the plural use which is sometimes made of them.

And I must contend, that if the plural pronoun had been used for the purpose of teaching a plurality of persons in the Deity, then the use of it would not have been incidental, as it now clearly is; but it would have been the constant and invariable practice. Nay, we may go further, and alledge, that if there be a plurality of persons in the Deity, the plural pronoun should always have been used, in compliance with the common rule of all languages; because the pronouns *we, us, our, &c.* are *personal* words, or words that are used in the place or stead of, and as-descriptive of the *person*—and not of the *abstract essence*: And therefore, if an instance could be given, where more than one person was in one essence, the pronouns used by that Being, or concerning him, would be *always* plural. And this leads me to adopt a position much more reasonable, and which will do much less violence to our understandings than that advanced by Trinitarians; namely, that the constant and almost invariable use of *singular* pronouns, wherever the Deity is represented as speaking, is, for the reasons I have just given, a most strong, universal, and invincible proof, that the *person* of the ever-blessed God is truly ONE.

What

What then is meant by the incidental use of plural pronouns, when the Deity is spoken of?—I think nothing is more plain. We all know, that when the Almighty is spoken of, he is not spoken of in such language as exactly suits *HIS nature*; but in such as best suits *OUR conceptions*. He is therefore frequently represented as surrounded by innumerable attendants; and, in order to accommodate what is truly the counsel of God's *own* individual will, to our understandings, he is represented as sitting in council, and pronouncing his laws, according to what we see and know of the practice of earthly powers. We know that no one is truly the counsellor of God; but we also know, that God, in the places alluded to, is represented to us as speaking to those who are the attendants of his throne. And in this view, where is the impropriety, if the Divine Being is represented as using these familiar words—"Let *us* make man, in *our* image, &c."—And "Whom shall *I* send, and who will go for *us*?"—It is equally probable that he should be represented as using these words to those who surrounded his throne; as that one person in the Deity should *really* ask another person in the Deity, whom they should send: for that would imply ignorance—or that one person, in an unity of essence, should really say to another person in that unity, Let *us* make man, &c.—for this would be nonsense.

At any rate, this is plain with respect to the words in Genesis, Let *us* make man in our image, &c. that nothing plural was intended in the use of the plural pronoun; in that the effect of this counsel was an act done by a single person.—God created man in *his* image, in the image of God created *he* him, &c. for here, the pronouns, which refer to the *act*, and not to

the *counsel*, are of the singular number. It is not said, that ALEIM created man in *their* image, &c. but in *his* image; which indicates, that the Being in whose image he was made, was PERSONALLY ONE.

And it should be strictly observed here, that God is never spoken of with a plural pronoun, except when he is represented as speaking in counsel: which justifies fully the observation of the Rabbi MAIMONIDES, when he says—"God is described as acting by the
 "MEDIATION of angels, (as Numb. xx. 16. Judg. ii. 4. Psal. civ. 4. Dan. vi. 22, &c.) Hence our
 "wise men have observed upon these passages of the
 "law, Let *us* make man in our image, and Let *us* go
 "down and confound their language—that God does
 "nothing without deliberating (if we may so speak)
 "in his counsel. Not that God discourses or consults with any one; but to shew, that he chooses to
 "employ the ministration of angels:" *Mor. Nev.* II. 6.

I shall close these observations with a quotation from the first Book of Kings, *chap.* xxii. *ver.* 19, &c. where the prophet *Micaiah* uses these emphatical words:—"I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and
 "all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right
 "hand and on his left: And the LORD said, Who
 "shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at
 "Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner,
 "and another said on that manner. And there came
 "forth a spirit, and said, I will persuade him, &c."
 —If this figurative representation of God in *council*, will not effectually corroborate the observations which have been made—then there is no such thing as *proof*; consequently, no such thing as a knowledge of TRUTH.

I now

I now take my leave of the author of *Horæ Solitariae*—and earnestly intreat, that when you read him again, you will not indulge too great a fondness for your present system; be less eager to take for granted, what is not proved—be less inclined to believe without evidence.—The more anxious we are to *fix* our creed, the more likely we shall be to entertain errors—There is something not quite becoming in too great impetuosity on this head—Let us coolly and dispassionately search after the Truth, and think it a glory that we are not ashamed to avow our convictions.

I am,

DEAR SIR,

Your's, &c.

G. CLARK.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

ON THE COMMON

INSUBSTANTIAL MODE

OF DEFENDING

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY,

And the Union of the two Natures in JESUS CHRIST.

THERE perhaps never was a doctrine or tenet the subject of man's investigation, or which has been offered to the contemplation of the human mind, more apparently doubtful than the doctrines of the Trinity in Unity, and the union of the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ: and when I say they are highly disputable, I regard this declaration with great seriousness; because it appears most evidently, that those doctrines make no part of the subject of Divine Revelation: on the contrary, that their whole support, or pretended support from thence, is, upon one or all of the following grounds.

1. Upon arbitrary surmises.
2. Upon voluntary and unfounded deductions, and inferences.
3. Upon dissingenuous and artful comparisons.
4. Upon capricious or misconceived expositions.
5. Upon interpolations, or alterations of the Sacred Records.
6. Upon

6. Upon palpable mistranslations of them.

7. Upon dogmatical postulata, in many instances contrary both to Reason and Revelation.

1st, *Upon arbitrary surmises.* Instances of this kind are very plentiful.—We may advert to the use which is made of the Hebrew word *אלהים*.—We are told that this word directs our views to a *plurality of persons* in the Deity; and this is contended for by Trinitarians, in direct opposition to the evidence of the Seventy translators, in every instance—who uniformly render it by the *singular* noun *Θεος*;—against the frequent examples we have of the use of it of single persons, *Exod. vii. 1.*—*1 King xi. 4. 33.*—*Psal. xlv. 6, 7, &c.*—against the almost constant use of it with singular verbs, and pronouns—against the authority of the apostle Paul, *Heb. i. 8, 9.* and against the authority of Christ himself, who uses a *singular* noun as the true translation of it, *Mark xii. 29.*

We may also advert, in proof of this charge of surmise, to the use which is made of the pronoun *Us*, *Gen. i. 26.* “*Let us make man, &c.*” And this against the laws of reason and common sense, which assure us that God doth not consult any one,—that he cannot consult himself. It is plainly a mere figurative mode of speech, by which God, who worketh all things according to *the council of his own will*, is represented as consulting and deliberating, before he determines.

These are arbitrary surmises, in that the Scriptures never declare that the word *Alcim*, points out a plural personality in the Deity; or that when God said, *Let us make man*, the first person in the Godhead spake to the second and third. — If this charge be denied, let it be done by shewing, that the Scriptures somewhere prove,

prove, that by the plural form of the word *Aleim*, is intended rather a plurality of persons, than of powers; and that the use of the plural pronoun, is not a figurative mode of representing to us the wisdom of the Divine determinations. — And let the proofs which shall be adduced to these points, be plain and apposite, or we shall not be able to withdraw the charge of surmise and conjecture.

But the most dangerous of these surmises, is to be found with those, who contend for the supreme Deity of our blessed Lord, because *no one else* could have merit sufficient to atone for the sins of mankind—*no one else* would be equal to the arduous task—*no one else* could prevail with the Deity for pardon and reconciliation! — This is an arbitrary and an implicit surmise, if there ever was one. It is *arbitrary*, because it stands aloof both from Reason and Scripture;—it is *implicit*, because the least examination would shew its impious absurdity, and refuse it credit.—*Holy Scripture* knows it not: the Scriptures *never* say that God wanted full satisfaction,—that he wanted one of infinite merit to redeem mankind:—whereas if this were a truth, it would be of such singular importance, that *every page* of the Divine Writings would teach it; it would not be left to the uncertain fate of inference and deduction.—It is a dogma which *Reason* totally reprobates:—*Reason* tells us, as the Scriptures do, that God is willing to receive the returning sinner, without an adequate satisfaction; which could have no other end, but to exclude Divine mercy---Reason tells us, that God could not satisfy himself---that if Christ were the true God, he would as much want satisfaction as the Father and the Holy Ghost---that Divine justice is *one*; and that

that even admitting the Trinitarian hypothesis, the justice of God the Son would be the same, and would as much want satisfaction as the justice of the Father and Holy Ghost.---And here Reason would add, that it is impossible the greatest and best of all Beings, the wonderful cause and origin of all things, could be made subject to his own law, and could be a criminal: and that if it were possible, it would be useless; because God may as well pardon without satisfaction, as pardon with a satisfaction made by himself.

2d, *Upon voluntary and unfounded deductions and inferences.*---As that, because Christ restored the dead to life, and did other acts of omnipotence, he must therefore be GOD, without considering, or without believing the positive and unequivocal declarations of Christ and his apostles, that the power which he exercised was not his own, but the omnipotence of GOD, who had sent him.---The Scriptures do indeed ascribe to him the works of Omnipotence; but the same Scriptures tell us that all power in heaven and earth was *given* to him,---that the works which he did were not his, but the *Father's* who sent him,---that he *could do nothing of himself*,---that the *Father* who dwelt in him *did the works*,---that they were brought into effect by the *finger* or *spirit* of God.---And that the MIRACLES, and WONDERS, and SIGNS, which evidenced the mission of our Lord, were *miracles*, and *wonders*, and *signs*, which GOD *did* BY HIM. Acts ii. 22.

3d, *Upon dissingenuous and artful comparisons.*—By shewing, for instance, from one of Paul's epistles, that Jesus Christ has the appellation GOD, and that in another he is denominated a *Man*: and so proving that

that he is both *God* and *Man*. Or by shewing that God is called a Saviour, and Christ is called a Saviour, and therefore concluding that he must be God. Or by shewing that he must be God, because the same acts are ascribed both to Christ and to God; not considering that our Lord's appearances were in the Divine authority and power: and not considering, that for the same reason, the same names and acts have been in the Scriptures applied and ascribed to Moses and to God.

Thus, Numb. xii. 3. "Now the *man* Moses was very meek, &c." Here Moses is called a *Man*.—Compare this with Exod. vii. 1. "And the Lord said unto Moses, see I have made thee a God, אלהים, to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."

So, Numb. xii. 11.—Moses is prayed to by Aaron. "Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my Lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned, &c." And Exod. x. 16, 17. "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in haste, and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you; now therefore forgive, I pray thee, my sin this once, &c."

The deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt, is attributed to Moses and to God; Exod. xxxii. 7. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Go get thee down: for thy people which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves." And Exod. xxxiii. 1. — Deut. v. 6. "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, &c."

Moses is also joined with the Supreme Deity as the object of faith, Exod. xiv. 31. "And the people feared

feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and his servant Moses."

Deut. xi. 13. Moses is represented as using language of himself, which if used by Christ, would be considered as a very ample proof of his supreme Godhead. "And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto *my commandments*, which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul: that I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, &c. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, &c."

4th, *Upon capricious or misconceived expositions of words and language.* — The word *Immanuel*, עִמָּנוּאֵל for instance, which is in plain English God *with us*, is made to signify that Christ is both God and Man — whereas the word conveys no such meaning, signifies no such thing; but points out to us what it expresses—that when Christ was in the world, God was with us: not because Christ was God, but because "GOD *was in* CHRIST reconciling the world unto himself," 2 Cor. v. 19. Or as it is elsewhere expressed more emphatically—"God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power: who went about doing good, &c. for GOD *was with* HIM," Acts x. 38. And so Zacharias, Luke i. 68. "Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel for having *visited* and redeemed his people, having raised up an horn of salvation for them in the house of his servant David."

And when our Lord declares his inferiority to the Father, we are told that he speaks as mediator, that he speaks of himself as he was man, not as he was God—And thus they make our blessed Lord to be perpetually on the quibble; sometimes speaking as

mediator, — sometimes as God, — sometimes as man, — sometimes as both God and man : — by which means the excellency of our Lord's character is exceedingly degraded.

Besides, every man of common sense must see and feel how trifling and impertinent such declarations as these are, when considered as answers to rational arguments. — The Scriptures do not, in any one instance, distinguish the wisdom or power of Christ, as he is God, from his wisdom and power as he is man ; or from his wisdom and power as God-man or mediator. And if the Scriptures do not so distinguish, where is our authority to do it ?

Again, it is said upon the authority of Phil. ii. 6. that Christ is equal with God — But what do they mean by being equal with God ? Do they mean by the term *God* here, the whole Godhead ? — No ; for Christ being one in the Godhead, he would then be equal with the whole Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, and so equal with himself ; which is nonsense say they. — The meaning then must be, that the person of the Son, was equal with the persons of the Father and Holy Ghost. — But here again we may enquire, what authority we have to say that the Father and Holy Ghost, in exclusion of the Son, are called by the absolute term *GOD* ? — And may we not ask, if this is the fact, why we were not told so ? Why we were left to find it out by a train of uncertain deductions ? I say uncertain deductions — for, where is an infallible rule ? Where is our certain authority ? Who told us it was so ? Is it in the Scriptures ? Is it in Reason ? Is it in some General Council, or Synod ? Or, is it the empty fabrication of some visionary speculatist, or metaphysician ?

And

And sometimes the meaning of the Scripture is misconceived : as 1 John v. 20. where Christ is supposed to be denominated the true God and eternal life : whereas that passage plainly means, that Christ hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, that is the true God : and that we are in him that is true ; that is, we are in the true God—How ? Why, IN OR THROUGH Jesus Christ—And this true one, in whom we so are in or through Christ, is the TRUE GOD and eternal life — See our Lord's own words, John xvii. 3. “ *This is eternal life, to know thee the only TRUE GOD, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* ” — The unlearned reader should be informed, that the word *even*, in the passage 1 John v. 20. is not in the original text ; but is supplied by the translators, and totally subverts the apostle's meaning.

So, “ The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,” Acts xx. 28. ---As though he who only hath IMMORTALITY, should have shed his blood for the restoration of mankind---Impious idea ! The Trinitarian starts back with horror, and denies the position.---He says God did not die --- he tells us it is called the blood of God, because God was personally united to flesh and blood.---But the Scripture never speaks of any such personal union ---- And it may with much more propriety be contended, that it is called the blood of God, because the death of Christ, the shedding of his blood, was the effect of the goodness and love of God.---“ GOD (says the apostle) commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” And Rom. iii. 24, 25. “ The redemption that is in Christ Jesus : whom GOD hath *set forth* to be a propitiation,

tiation, through faith *in his blood*. Those who are dispossessed of prejudice, will, without much difficulty, estimate the comparative merits of these two observations.

And 1 John iii. 16. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us." This is supposed to prove the Deity of Christ, because the text intimates that God laid down his life for us : —but it is to be observed, that the words "*of God*," are not to be found in the best Greek manuscripts, nor in the very printed Greek text we generally use —But if the words are genuine, the sense is very clear, as speaking of the love of God, because he (Christ) laid down his life for us ; and would then be exactly parallel to *ver.* 9 and 10. in the next chapter. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us ; because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.—Herein is love ; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." —The love of God being expressed in sending his Son to submit to death for our advantage.

5th, *Upon interpolations and alterations of the Sacred Records.*—As in the instance of John v. 7. and 1 Tim. iii. 16. two of the Trinitarian bulwarks : both of which have every thing against them, which can render any thing suspicious and exceptionable.

6th, *Upon palpable mistranslations of them.*—As may be seen in the course of my Observations on Mr. HARPER'S Address to Dr. DISNEY : particularly Isa. ix. 6. Rom. ix. 5. Phil. ii. 6, &c.

7th, *Upon dogmatical postulata, unsupported by Scripture ; and, in many instances, contrary both to Reason and Revelation.*—And this is to be seen in such declarations

tions as teach, that the union of the man Christ was with the SECOND PERSON in the Trinity, when the Scripture in every instance represents that union to have been with the FATHER—and in such as teach that this union was a *personal union*, whereas the Scripture represents it as an union by the *indwelling* of GOD.

This is also the case where they would teach us, that *two natures* can be *one person*: the one *mortal*, the other *immortal*: the one *passible*, the other *impassible*: the one *finite*, the other *infinite* — That one of these “*the human*” was a mere nature, without a person — and yet Christ is represented by them as frequently speaking in his human capacity.

That *persons* in the Trinity, are not to be considered in the common sense of *persons*,—by which they destroy the Divine personality altogether;—and yet that one of these *persons* served for two natures in the one Christ.

That THREE *persons* subsist in ONE common *nature*: and that this is essentially necessary to be known—which is indeed passing strange, when we consider that the Scriptures so frequently and expressly speak of the absolute *Unity* of God, and yet leave us no express declarations that in that unity is a Trinity!

A reader unused to theological disquisitions, will stand aghast, and enquire how it is possible that men should believe positions so much above reason, without rational evidence of the fact? It may also be asked, whether those who so earnestly contend for the Trinity, do under these circumstances really believe it?—It has been very much doubted whether men can seriously and sincerely say one thing (as to speculative points of religion) and believe another — It seems to me very probable that men may do so—and I think it
has

has been, in a great measure, the case with Trinitarians—For while men have endeavoured to support an equality of the Son and the Holy Ghost, with the Father, they have in their general views, ideas, and practice, paid Divine honours to the Father as the *supreme*:—and although they contend for the personality and equality of the Holy Ghost, they rather pray to the Father to send his Holy Spirit upon them, than to the Holy Ghost to influence them:—This may appear strange, but it is no more strange than true. It is pretty well known that Christianity has been greatly corrupted from its original purity and simplicity; darkness has been called light, and light, darkness—the world has long been immersed in a thick cloud of ignorance and superstition.—But amidst all this darkness and ignorance, this I verily believe to be a fact, that in true and undisguised sentiment the whole Christian world has been and is, Unitarian.—Truth is great, and will prevail in the heart of the sincere Christian, although his tongue may deny it—and it is to the *mind*, as the seat of truth and error, that God looks—I am inclined to think that there never yet was a Trinitarian, who did not in his mind pay that honour and distinction to God even the Father, that he did not to either the Son or the Holy Ghost.—The ascription of *supreme* honour and glory is invariably to the GREAT FATHER of all: although the tongue pleads for the consubstantiality, and co-equality of the Son and Holy Ghost. And this observation may serve as an apology for our Trinitarian brethren, and does them the justice of an excuse, without any imputation upon their sincerity: For if the prejudices of education will force an implicit faith, and external confession, contrary to the powerful

erful impulse of Truth upon the mind, in acts of religious worship; we have only to admire the goodness of him who keeps the mind uncontaminated by error, amidst the various opinions and inventions of men.

These observations I have written, in order to restrain a little the ardor of many learned in this our day; and I have been led to them by perusing the works of a WHITE, —a HORNE, —a HORSLEY, —a HAWKINS, &c.

I am inclined to expect that the Rev. Mr. WHITE, whose name I have used, will at least excuse the above observation, that the practice and real belief of men may materially differ—for I perceive that he has in his second Bamptonian Sermon, p. 85. taught the same doctrine, upon a very similar subject.—His words are these: “To this doctrine (that is of the *Unity* of God) the greater part of the Arabians, before the time of Mahomet, were no strangers: and though *in practice* they had miserably corrupted themselves, by the worship of inferior agents, yet *in belief* they still maintained the Unity of the Divine nature sacred and inviolate.”

The ill effect, however, of the doctrine, is but too visible in the weapons it furnishes the deist with,—in the doubt and distress it occasions to many honest minds,—and in the horrid ideas * that attend an inadequate knowledge of it. — The last of these is very amply displayed in a book I lately by chance cast my eye

* “Christ is ascended up to Heaven,

“The Comforter to us is given:

“One God’s divided into three,

“Without which none can saved be.”

See a Grub-street poem, in the hands of half the old women and children in the kingdom, called *Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained*.

eye upon, written, if I do not mistake, in defence of Christianity, by one whose name I think was STEPHENS; in which he observes, that the human nature of Christ after his resurrection was taken up into heaven, and became a part of the Godhead.

The question between us, is not whether there are, or are not, certain expressions in the Old and New Testament, which might be accommodated to the doctrine of the Trinity — there no doubt are: and it would perhaps be difficult to conceive a doctrine, which particular passages of the Scriptures might not be accommodated to. But the question is, Do the Scriptures, in any one instance, expressly teach that there are *three* persons in the *one* undivided essence of the Trinity? The answer is palpable — they do not: and therefore it comes not up to the point before us, to contend, that a passage in Moses, and a passage in Paul put together, might be so understood as to indicate, at first sight, the Deity of Christ. — Nor does it fill up the proof, first of all to take for granted that the doctrine of the Trinity is a doctrine of Revelation, and then to shew that a passage in Paul does not *contradict* it. — Where is the passage which declares that in God are three distinct *persons*? Or that the Son is *one* in *essence* with the Father? Or with the Holy Ghost? Or that the Son and Holy Ghost are in any other sense one? Where is it said, or supposed, that the Father is the *first* person of the Trinity, the Son the *second* person, the Holy Ghost the *third*? Does it appear in Holy Writ, that the Son and Holy Ghost are as constantly the objects of prayer and praise as the Father is? Or does not supreme adoration appear there to be the prerogative of the Father only? Does it there appear, that the Son is the foundation
of

of wisdom, power and goodness ; or is the Father the single indisputed source of these perfections ? In all the past ages of the world, where is the Holy Spirit represented as acting or speaking as Him who is supremely God ? Do the Scriptures ever represent him in the personal character of God ? or as any thing distinct from God ? Or rather do they not speak of the Spirit as the power, influence, or energy of God ? Or do they not represent the one living and true God, as acting and speaking *in* and *by* his Spirit ? If the Son were the supreme God, equally God with the Father ; if the Holy Spirit were the supreme God, equally God with the Father—would not the Son, would not the Holy Spirit, appear throughout the Scriptures in those characters ? Would the Supreme Being be constantly represented as one, and that one as *having* a spirit, if that spirit were as supremely God, as he is God whose spirit it is ? Do not the Scriptures represent GOD simply and absolutely as speaking of the *Spirit* — but do the Scriptures ever represent GOD simply and absolutely as speaking of the *Father* ? And why is not this the case, if the Spirit is equally supremely God with the Father ? Does not the Old Testament throughout speak of the Spirit, or the spirit of Jehovah, as the spirit of Aleim ? Does not this particle *of*, indicate that the Spirit belongs to, and is not a person co-essential with Jehovah ? And does not this shew that the Spirit is not the Supreme Being, in the sense in which Jehovah is the Supreme Being ? Are not love, benevolence, wisdom, power, goodness, mercy, attributed to the Father ? But are benevolence, wisdom, power, or mercy, even ascribed to the Spirit ? Is it ever said that the Spirit is omnipotent ? omniscient ? or merciful ? just ? or good ? Or

are Christians ever denominated the church, the people, or the servants of the Holy Ghost? And are not all these deficiencies proofs, that ideas of co-equality, co-essentiality, distinct personality in the DEITY, Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, are children of the imagination, the offspring of fanciful philosophy, equally destitute both of evidence and of truth?

And with regard to the DEITY of our Lord—Let it be shewn where he ever spake of himself as possessing more essences than one? As having in *two* natures or essences, *one* person? Or as being in his own person the very and eternal GOD, and a MAN, the work of God's hands? Or where he has distinguished himself as GOD, from himself as MAN? And if no proof can be given where he so spake of himself, let some plain and indisputable proofs be adduced where his apostles or disciples have so spoken? Let it be shewn where, distinguishing his manhood from his Godhead, our Lord claimed equal dominion, equal supremacy with the Father? And where he has spoken of the Holy Ghost as one in essence, dominion, and supremacy with the Father and himself? Let it be made out satisfactorily, that when he declared the superior greatness of the Father, and that he derived his wisdom, his power, and his authority from him, either that he meant nothing, or that he did not speak of himself, but only of a part of himself? And that when he declared "The Father is greater than I," he meant that the Father was *greater*; but was nevertheless no more than *equal*? In a word, let it be shewn that the Great and Eternal God, possessing one understanding, one mind, one will; the first person in that Deity was full of wrath, the second person in that Deity was full of mercy, and the third person was willing

willing to assist the second in quenching the flames kindled by the wrath of the first.—Let it be shewn that Divine justice is one—and that the second person, assisted by the third, actually satisfied all the demands of justice in the first—But let it be also shewn that the justice of the third was satisfied by the intervention and mediation of the second; and that the justice of the second was ever satisfied at all, either by a sacrifice and offering made *of himself, by himself, to himself*, or by what other means; or shew that no such satisfaction was required? And then that the justice of the second, which was the same with the justice of the first person, was not so rigid as the justice of the first, that is, that it was not so rigid as itself was?—These things done, the author will yield the palm to TRUTH, and confess its inscrutable and unconquerable power: but 'till this be done, he must resist the influence of Errors so apparently opposite to common observation and common sense—Errors which have nothing to recommend them but mystery and tradition, except that they are the King's high-roads to the temples of WEALTH and POWER.

THE END.

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